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"IT'S SUCH A HARD THING TO BE A PRINCESS."

THE PRINCESS MARGARETHE

BY

JOHN D. BARRY

ILLUSTRATED BY

THOMAS McILVAINE

NEW YORK
GEO. M. ALLEN COMPANY
BROADWAY AND 21ST STREET

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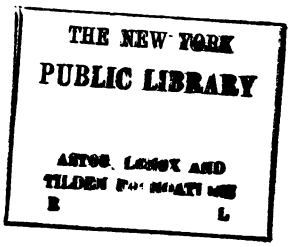

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TO

ALL LITTLE GIRLS WHO WOULD

LIKE TO BE PRINCESSES

The Princess Margarethe.

CHAPTER I.

CHLAFENBURG was still. The air seemed faintly and regularly to throb, as if keeping time with the heart-beats of the sleeping people. It was at that hour when night is drifting into morning, and Nature takes her last deep rest. The sharp outlines of the great stone palace were nearly lost in the heavy mists; only a feeble light, muffled by heavy curtains, could be seen within. But when a faint flush of purple appeared in the east, the dark mass slowly shaped itself into towers, and turrets, and angles, and the mists were resolved into drops of dew that covered the grass and the petals of the flowers. The purple glowed into pink, shot

with fine lines of light. The ridges of the mountains stood boldly out, as if cut with a knife. Then the flaming sun began to rise majestically from behind them, flashing its rays into the windows of the palace, which wove them into the colors of the rainbow. When it rose to the top of the mountain, and stood dancing on the edge, the heavy iron bell beneath the dome of the palace shook madly in the air, and from it came a clashing and a clanging that resounded in all parts of the city. In a moment, the sounds were echoed and reëchoed from many directions, by bells of every kind.

The effect of this clamor was marvellous. The whole city seemed suddenly to awake; windows were thrown open, and heads covered with night-caps were thrust out. Neighbor tried to speak with neighbor, but the voices were drowned in the chorus of the bells. Yet this hubbub seemed to please every one. Women waved their hands to one another to indicate that they were glad because of some good fortune, and the men, whose faces could be seen peering

over the women's shoulders, showed by their looks that they, too, shared in the rejoicing.

Presently a few persons began to appear on the streets. They hastened to the great square in the centre of the city, where the people always assembled on notable occasions. All were in holiday dress. They gathered together in knots and tried to converse, but when they found they could not be understood they made signs to one another wildly. After a few minutes the clanging ceased. As soon as their voices could be heard the people cheered noisily, and chattered away as fast as they could speak.

"Long live King Rudolph and the good Queen Louisa!" they cried; and the cry was repeated many times.

"And long live King Rudolph the Second!" exclaimed a jolly-looking man, with a round, red face and flaxen hair.

The people that heard him laughed gaily at his words, and reëchoed them with a shout that must have been heard miles away.

"Ah, be not so sure it's a boy," cried an old woman in the crowd. She had lost her

teeth and spoke slowly and with a kind of lisp. "Perhaps it's only a girl, after all."

"A girl!" cried the man with the red face, scornfully, as if the suggestion were ridiculous. "A girl! That can't be. Providence would not keep our good king waiting all these years and then disappoint him at last."

"We shall soon know whether it's a boy or a girl," cried the shrill voice of a young woman, standing with a babe in her arms. "The bells on the Santa Maria will tell us in a minute. If they strike only twelve, 'tis a girl; but if it's a boy, they'll strike a hundred."

As she spoke the famous silver bell on the church of the Santa Maria struck one. The sound shot through the air, passed from ear to ear and slowly died away. The chattering ceased. A murmur of "Hush, hush!" swept through the crowd, and the people stood like statues, listening to the voice of the bell.

The second stroke rang, and grew fainter and fainter, until it could be heard no more; then the third and the fourth. Not a word was said, no one in the city dared to stir.

Those who had not had time to dress and appear in the streets were leaning breathless from their windows, their lips parted in anxious expectancy. When the twelfth stroke was heard a shudder seemed to pass through the crowd. The sound echoed slowly into silence. The faces of the women turned pale; the eyes of the men looked almost fierce in their motionless stare.

For a long moment nothing could be heard. Then, when the time for the next stroke had passed, almost in the same breath the people cried:

"It's a girl!"

For an instant again there was silence, and then some one shouted, with a weak effort to be enthusiastic:

"Long live the princess!"

A faint cheer, made chiefly by voices of the women, was the only response. The faces of the people showed disappointment. Some of the men looked sullen. Only a few gave signs of being pleased, and these were women.

"A girl!" cried the man with the round,

red face in a scornful, almost angry tone. His eyes had ceased to twinkle and his mouth looked bitter. "'Tis a grievous shame and 'twill bring sorrow to his Majesty."

The old woman without any teeth smiled at him with a smile that was meant to be pleasant, but only made her look wicked.

"You were too sure, my lad," she lisped. "His Majesty must bow to the will of the Lord just like us poor folks. And a little princess is not to be despised, for aught she be not so dear to the kingdom as a prince."

"'Tis not that I despise the little princess, good wife," replied the man, somewhat calmed by the old woman's words. "I have little girls of my own at home and often on my knees have I thanked the good God for them. But though to us a lass may every day be as rare a gift from heaven as a lad, with a king 'tis different. Who now will keep our children safe from the evil ways of the shameless Prince Fritz? Truly, Providence hath flouted us by sending a daughter to our valiant king."

"Do not presume to judge the ways

of the Lord," cried the old woman in her cracked voice. "'Tis not for us to tell Him what to do, and our king's but a man forsooth."

By this time the people had recovered from the shock of their disappointment and were ready to rejoice at the coming of a daughter to the king and queen. They were determined not to be cheated out of their merry-making by a trick of fate.

"Let us all go to the palace," cried one, an old peasant, who spoke as if he was a person of authority, "and pay homage to our new princess."

This plan received approval at once. The people, laughing and shouting, trooped through the streets as fast as such a large body could move together. Their numbers were constantly increased as they passed along by those that had not had time to dress before the bells of Santa Maria began ringing. Many in the crowd had covered themselves with the first clothing they could seize and they presented a grotesque appearance. Some of the women wore nothing on

their heads and the hair of a few of them fell loosely down their shoulders and floated in the air. One old woman, in her haste to appear in the street, had forgotten to remove her night-cap and continued to wear it in serene and happy unconsciousness. It was a strange gathering, but all its members were so absorbed in discussing the great event of the morning that they did not notice one another's appearance. When they reached the palace they raised such a shout that the stone walls seemed to tremble.

"Long live the princess!" they cried. "Long live the good Louisa! Long live the noble Rudolph!"

Again and again they shouted. In their joy at the birth of the princess, they forgot that they would have been even more glad if a boy had come in her place.

Presently the king came out to acknowledge their greetings. He stood on the stone balcony in front of the palace. When the people saw him they shouted with even greater enthusiasm than before. He wore a loose military jacket of blue cloth. His

head was bare. He was a tall, handsome man, with a muscular figure and a clear-cut face, with long, flowing moustaches. He looked pale and unhappy, and when he smiled, as he turned to his subjects, it was with a smile that had no sign of joy.

"How sad he looks!" said one woman to another, after he entered the palace and the people went slowly back to their homes.

"Ah," was the answer, "'tis the bitterness of his disappointment."

CHAPTER II.

NEARLY as much excitement was caused within the castle by the coming of the little princess as there was without. Pages were running from room to room, messengers were being sent with despatches far and near, attendants were bustling hither and thither, and the king's guard in their red uniforms were flying about in most unsoldierlike fashion.

A group of ladies of the court stood in the royal ante-chamber, conversing in low tones. In one corner sat a motherly-looking woman, whose peasant dress made an odd contrast with the fine clothes of the others. Her face was rosy, and her brown hair, half concealed by a muslin cap with long streamers, was smoothed simply over her clear brow. Her blue eyes had a look of eager expectation. She was the nurse

that had been chosen to take care of the princess.

Presently, the great oaken door leading from the queen's apartment was thrown open, and a stately-looking old lady appeared, bearing in her arms a little object covered with laces. The ladies in the anteroom gathered quickly around her and began to peer into the face of the princess. At first the babe seemed quite unconscious of the excitement she was creating; for a long time she did not open her eyes. It was not until she was passed from the arms of the stately lady into the arms of the nurse, that the little eyes blinked, fluttered a moment in the bright light, and then opened wide and stared so hard that some of the ladies became almost frightened. The look seemed to say:

"What does this excitement and flurry mean? Who are all these people standing in fine array about me? And who am I, pray, that they should stare at me so?" Then she fixed her wee little eyes on the rosy face of the nurse smiling down upon her.

The look of inquiry deepened and the

eyes filled with tears, apparently tears of pain and disappointment because her questions were not answered; her lips quivered and her mouth opened to utter a plaintive cry. This cry seemed to afford the nurse and the group of ladies great relief.

"There!" said the old lady who had carried the babe into the room, "she has cried at last. I was beginning to be afraid she never would open her mouth. It's always a bad sign if a child doesn't cry as soon as it's born."

"Poor little thing!" said another, a young woman who had a little girl of her own, "what a mournful cry it was, and what sad eyes she has! The look, too, when she first opened them, was so pathetic."

"Perhaps she realizes," said a wizened old woman in a brown wig and a flowered gown with a long train, "that she came without being wanted. I left the queen crying her eyes out when she heard it was a girl. And when they told the king he stormed fearfully. It's a terrible disappointment to them."

The babe, by this time, was nestling peace-

fully in the arms of the nurse. The ladies, after gazing for a few moments on the little red face, with its faint suggestion of a nose and with its wee mouth and chin, and on the tightly closed white eyes with no sign of eyebrows, retired to the corner of the room, where they continued to discuss her arrival in low tones.

"She will have a melancholy temperament," said the old woman with the wizened face. "I can tell it from the expression in her blue eyes."

"It is easy to predict that," said another. "Even though she is a princess, I am afraid her life won't be a very happy one. She has come where she's not wanted, poor little thing. See how innocent she looks. Ah, if she were only not a princess. But the king and queen have no affection to waste on a girl."

"No," replied the old woman, "she ought to have been a boy, that's certain. But we can't arrange these things ourselves. If we could, you may be sure I wouldn't have made myself a girl."

The conversation was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of the king himself. He had changed his loose coat for a richly-gilt and tight-fitting uniform that set off his athletic figure. His features, on close observation, seemed as if they had been chiseled out of marble. His mouth was so firm, that his lips seemed always pressed closely together, and it had a stern expression that even his moustaches could not hide. On his entrance the ladies arose from their seats. Without noticing them, he went at once to the nurse holding the babe in arms. She placed her on her lap and removed the lace covering from her forehead. He bent low and gazed at the sleeping infant for a moment, without speaking and with a frown on his brow. Then he turned to the nurse and said :

" I wish to see as little of this child as possible. See to it that she is kept out of my sight."

Then he strode from the room.

For a moment there was silence ; the ladies stood motionless.

'" His Majesty cannot conceal his disap-

pointment," said the old woman grimly, as she hobbled away, followed by the others.

"Poor babe!" said the nurse, bending over to kiss the infant's lips.

CHAPTER III.

HE apartment of Queen Louisa was a vast room with high fretted ceilings and long Gothic windows half covered with draperies of heavy cloth. The walls were hung with tapestries, picturing scenes of war and peace in the history of the country, the two largest representing the baptism by the Pope of Guthrun, the King's great ancestor; the other, the marriage in the Cathedral of Schlafenburg of Gottfried to the Princess Augusta, whose deeds of charity are still recorded in the annals of Schlafenland. One of the smaller pieces commemorated the parting of Queen Bertha with King Otto on the eve of his glorious victory, for which he paid with his life: her long black hair streamed almost to her feet; her pale face was distorted with grief, but with her right arm outstretched she bade her husband go forth to battle. In nearly all of the other tapestries

the great queens of the past figured, as it was fitting they should in the apartment of the reigning queen.

But beautiful as the tapestries were, they lost effectiveness by contrast with the two full-length portraits on the wall. One of these was the portrait of a woman of surpassing loveliness, apparently about twenty-five years old. Her features were strong, yet delicately moulded; her brow was noble in its breadth and purity, and in her deep blue eyes there was an expression of firmness and gentleness, of happiness and sorrow, that made the face strangely interesting and attractive. Her hair was worn high, and on its heavy braids lay a gold coronet studded with jewels. Her tall figure was gracefully poised and gave an impression of majestic dignity. Over the whole picture there was a look of melancholy — perhaps it came from the eyes — that filled the beholders with pity. It represented Queen Margarethe, mother of King Rudolph, who had died three months after his birth.

The other picture was the portrait of a

majestic man, whose apparent size was perhaps increased by the long military cloak that fell over his left shoulder and concealed half his figure. His features were large, especially his chin, which, by its heaviness, marred the beauty of his dark eyes and shaggy head. Beneath his brown moustaches one could see the firm-set lips that made him look almost fierce; but the eyes contradicted this expression, for they were soft and gentle. The face and figure indicated a man of firm will, guided by the restraint of a kindly nature. These, indeed, were the qualities of King Wilhelm as they were remembered in Schlafenland by those of his subjects that lived to pay homage to his son.

Three weeks after the birth of the little princess there was a notable gathering in the queen's apartment. All the great dignitaries of the kingdom were there, and many others from foreign countries: courtiers in gorgeous uniforms, ambassadors in official dress, distinguished prelates in ceremonial robes, and all the ladies in attendance on the queen. The king and queen stood in the centre of

the room, under a white satin canopy surmounted by a gold crown. Queen Louisa looked more like a wonderful picture than a human being. The front of the robe she wore, of a dazzling white material, was sewn with pearls, and in her high hair gleamed clusters of pearls. Her features were so delicately shaped, and her complexion so pale, that people used to compare her face to a bit of exquisite porcelain. Her dark-blue eyes were so large and brilliant that they seemed almost black. It was said of her, by one of the court poets, that her soul blazed out of them; others said, that they blazed with the fire of unsatisfied ambition.

At a signal from the king, the nurse entered from a side door, bearing her charge wrapped in laces. A little maid dressed in white, who followed, removed the lace from the face of the infant. The princess opened wide her eyes, and gazed about in wonder. Her face had lost its redness, and was almost pale; the down on her head had grown thicker, and faint lines of eyebrows had appeared; but in the eyes there was the same

expression of bewilderment as when they first opened. The queen looked down on the child for a moment, then turned away. The king did not notice her.

Then there was a buzzing among the ladies and the courtiers, and the eyes of every one were directed toward the babe. One of the ladies ventured to approach the nurse and look into the face of the princess. As this operation was performed without disaster other ladies followed the example, and each in turn gazed and smiled into the little eyes, in which the bewildered look seemed to grow deeper and deeper. Then, one by one, the courtiers tiptoed toward the bundle of laces, and each paid it the homage of his smile, sometimes such a hideous artificial grimace that it was a wonder the babe did not cry out in terror. But her conduct was worthy of her station, except that she seemed not in the least to understand the meaning of the ceremony.

When every one in the room had paid court to the princess, there was silence for a few moments. No one dared speak above

a whisper. The king looked fierce and the queen sad and bitter. Presently the double doors leading into the apartment were thrown open and an imposing old man entered, dressed in the red cape of a cardinal and wearing a gold cross, and carrying in his right hand a large prayer-book with clasps of gold. He was followed by two altar-boys. He approached the little princess, the queen watching his movements with her mournful eyes, the king with an expression of weariness. The altar-boys stood behind him; the king at the cardinal's right.

The old woman with the wizened face, whom people addressed as the Princess Wilhelmina, approached the babe and took it in her arms.

"Where is Babrantino? Was he not to be sponsor with you?" the king asked impatiently.

"He was here a moment ago, your Majesty," she replied in a husky voice.

A feeble old man made his way through the crowd of ladies and gentlemen gathered round the infant.

"I am here, your Majesty," he said.

"Then proceed with the ceremony," cried the king.

The cardinal mumbled a long prayer in Latin, addressed some words to the old woman and the old man beside him, to which they responded briefly, and then he proceeded to take some water from the font and pour it on the head of the babe. The eyes of the little princess were wide open: they remained open and she made no sound. The mumbling continued for a long time. The cardinal finally took some ashes in his fingers and crossed the brow of the princess with it, saying in Latin:

"I name thee Margarethe Louisa Wilhelmina Augusta Maria."

Then he mumbled more prayers in Latin, and the ceremony was over.

The babe, which had not cried once, was bundled off with the nurse, the cardinal retired with his altar-boys, the ladies and gentlemen saluted the queen and the king and slowly withdrew, leaving the royal pair together. For a moment there was silence:

the splendid apartment seemed deserted and forlorn. Then the queen burst into tears.

"If God had only sent us a boy, Rudolph," she sobbed.

"Hush!" he said. "It's useless to complain."

CHAPTER IV.

HOUGH the princess had been given several names, she was known by only one, the Princess Margarethe. She was a strange child. She rarely cried. When she did it was with a feeble, pathetic cry that would go to one's heart. It used to make the old peasant woman that did menial work in the court declare she would not live to grow up.

She would lie for hours in her richly-gilded crib, stamped with the royal coat of arms and covered with a canopy of white satin, her eyes wide open and in them the bewildered, wondering look. She never would respond to the caresses of those that approached her, but would gaze at them questioningly, as if to ask who they were and what they wanted. If they attempted to touch her or to kiss her face she would turn away, or, if she was with the nurse,

would suddenly throw her arms about the nurse's neck and cling there with all the tenacity of fear.

For the nurse alone she had affection. She was restless and unhappy when Johanna was out of her sight. The nurse, too, had learned to love her with a mother's love, which was, perhaps, the deeper because she had lost her own child only a few weeks before the birth of the princess. Indeed, she took the place of mother to the babe, for the queen rarely came to see the princess, and when she did she remained only a few moments.

The king's command that Margarethe should be kept from his sight had been carefully observed, and he rarely approached her after the ceremony of her baptism and christening. For a little while the old woman with the wizened face came frequently, but her visits inspired the princess with such terror they were discontinued.

"*Ach!*" she would say on these occasions, as she looked down into the eyes of the babe, in which wonder and fear were

blended, "there's something strange about that child. I don't like these supernatural infants. No good ever comes of 'em."

So the little princess grew amid evil prophecies. No one showed love for her except the nurse; every one else was either indifferent to her or afraid of her. She made those who came within the radius of her eyes feel as if she were looking them through and through, into their very souls, seeing their darkest sins and chiding them for their wickedness and hypocrisy. The look of wonder never left her, but became every day more beseeching, more plaintive. It appeared always to say: "Please explain this life to me. I can't understand it, and it's so hard not to understand it."

As she grew older she seemed to realize that no one could explain it, and this made the problem all the more painful. So she clung closer and closer to the nurse and grew more and more afraid of the people about her. "The timid little Princess Margarethe," the people in the court called her. Sometimes the Duke of Babrantino would

bring *bonbons* to her. She received him with less fear than the others, for he was such a poor, feeble old man he couldn't hurt any one.

It took her much longer to learn to speak than it does most children. When she did learn she spoke with a curious deliberation and distinctness, as if she were always weighing her words. She often seemed to be struggling to ask questions she could not express. She spoke very little except to the nurse, to whom she was forever putting the most puzzling queries. She always called the nurse "Mamma."

"I am not your mamma," said Johanna to her one day. "Your mamma is the pretty lady that comes to see you sometimes, the pretty lady that kisses you."

"But I don't want the pretty lady for a mamma," the little princess exclaimed with tears in her eyes. "I don't love the pretty lady; I love you, and I want you to be my mamma."

The little princess could not be made to see that the nurse was not her mamma and that

it was wrong to call her so. Every effort to convince her only deepened her bewilderment. Finally, the queen was consulted as to what should be done in the predicament.

"Oh," she said, carelessly, "if the child wants to call the nurse 'mamma,' let her. It will do no harm and she will outgrow it."

This was only the beginning of the difficulties with the little princess. When she was four years old the nurse tried to explain to her what it was to be the daughter of the king, how she was superior to other little girls, that she was, in fact, the most important little girl in the kingdom.

"Why am I better than other little girls?" she asked. "Are all little girls bad 'cept me? Am I the only good little girl in the world? Then this must be a very bad world an' God must be a bad God to make so many naughty little girls."

She could not be made to comprehend how accident of birth could make her better than others. She puzzled long over the problem and finally gave it up with a sigh.

"I don't understand it," she would say,

"an' I don't want to be better than other little girls."

The princess was kept under the strictest care in the apartments allotted to her in the royal household. Once a day she was taken for a walk into the gardens in the rear of the palace; but as no other children were there she often felt lonesome. Sometimes she went for a drive with the nurse across the beautiful hill that stood like a majestic sentinel keeping watch over the city. This was her greatest pleasure, though she was permitted only to look out of the window of the carriage and never to leave it. At first, whenever she passed a group of children playing on the grass or by the side of the little brook that ran between the high hills, she would ask if she might not get out and join them in their games. But the nurse seemed so frightened whenever she expressed a desire to do this that she soon ceased to speak of her wish and contented herself with watching the children from the window. Johanna was so kind-hearted that she would have been glad to allow the princess to play

with the children, but she knew that if she did the queen would hear of it and would be indignant, and that Margarethe might therefore be taken from her care.

The nursery of the princess was situated in the wing of the palace facing the public park. Most of her time was spent in looking out of her high windows, covered with iron bars, at the birds in the trees and at the boys and girls playing on the grass. Sometimes these children would stop their games to gaze up at her.

"Why do they do that?" she would ask the nurse.

"Because you're the Princess Margarethe, the greatest princess in the country," Johanna would reply.

This answer mystified her. She would brood over it for a while and then say:

"But why can't I go out and play with those little girls down there?"

"Because," the reply always was, "it is not proper for a princess to play with common children."

"Then I don't want to be a princess," she

would cry. "It isn't nice to be a princess a bit. Please don't let me be a princess any more. I don't like it."

Then the nurse would try to reason with her, but always without giving her satisfaction.

CHAPTER V.

UDOLPH the First and Queen Louisa were unconscious of wrong-doing in neglecting the princess. They were like many people who have so much business to attend to that they forget about boys and girls who ought also to be attended to. The king worked hard all day and sometimes until late at night, making plans in order that all his subjects might be happy; so he did not have time to spare a few moments each day to make one little girl happy. And the queen was as busy as the king; indeed, people used to say it was she that first thought of the plans the king tried to carry out, and that the king never thought of executing any plan until he had consulted the queen. Besides, the queen was obliged to give many balls and *fêtes* and dinners to ambassadors and to the great people that she thought ought to be friends of the king and the

country. She was so occupied with these things that she could not be bothered with a little girl who was kept out of her sight in one of the wings of the palace.

Queen Louisa did not have time even to think of the days, not so very far away in the past, when she, too, was a girl. Those were the days before she dreamed of being a queen and of sharing the care of a kingdom and of thousands of subjects. If she had known what she was going to become, her childhood might not have been so happy as it was.

She was the only daughter of a poor duke, who, after losing nearly all of his estates, broken in health and sorely grieved by the loss of the mother of his babe, had retired to his small castle, far away in the depths of the forest. Until her seventeenth year she and her father lived together in the broken-down place like two happy children, with two old servants, who clung to them in their misfortunes, to supply their few wants.

One day a band of huntsmen came to their door and asked shelter for the night. The old duke gave them such hospitality as

he could afford. After dinner, while they sat in the decayed old hall round the crackling log-fire, his daughter played on the harp airs that once had been popular in the court, and sang for them quaint songs of chivalry. A week after they were gone the duke learned that their handsome leader, who had made such pretty speeches to the girl, was the young Prince Rudolph, heir to the kingdom. He heard this from the prince himself, who returned to the castle to tell the duke he had fallen in love with the beautiful Louisa and had come back to woo her. The duke in his exile had lost none of his family pride and he deemed his house, in spite of its fallen fortunes, worthy of the honor the prince wished to pay it.

But Louisa herself became alarmed when

she discovered what a great personage the huntsman was. She had been charmed with his bronzed, frank face and delighted with his fine compliments. She had thought of him during many of the long evenings since he had left them as she sat in her lonely hall, weaving visions out of the fantastic flames in the fire and for the first time in her life feeling the loneliness of the place. But the prince wooed her patiently, just as if he were not a prince and had not the choice of any other maid in the country. And at last, after a few months, he won her consent, and just a year from the time of her first wooing she was made the princess of the realm and the future queen in the great cathedral at Schlafenburg.

It was only fifteen months later that the old king died. During this year the princess had learned the ways of the court; it was wonderful how quickly she became familiar with them. Soon after she was made queen every one declared she seemed always to have been a queen. Her enemies used to say that she was ambitious, that she

strove to make her court greater than all the neighboring courts, that she wished to rule over Schlafenland herself instead of letting the king rule, and that if she did not cease to interfere in the government the country would go to destruction.

But the kingdom, on the contrary, prospered, and the new king and queen won the homage, if they did not win the affection of all their subjects. For there was more respect and fear than love in the admiration paid them. Their fame spread afar, even to England, and people were known to take long journeys in order merely to see them as they rode out for their drive in the afternoon. And as the queen sat in stately dignity by the king's side in the royal carriage no one that did not know it could ever suspect that she had lived all her childhood a simple country girl.

But in the hearts of the king and the queen, beneath their fine array and their royal dignity, lurked a great grief. For six years they had prayed that God, who had guided them in their prosperous reign,

would bless them with an heir who should continue the great work they were doing. It was their ambition to leave to their descendants a kingdom which, guided by the principles they had established, should be a lasting benefit to mankind and a glory to their name. They were the more anxious for the granting of their prayer, because, if they had not a son, the country would, on the death of King Rudolph, be ruled by the king's half-brother, Prince Fritz, who would be sure to undo all the good work they had done and perhaps ruin the country.

The mother of the king had died when he was only seven years old and Prince Fritz was the son of his father's second queen, sister to the Princess Wilhelmina. Queen Maria, weak both physically and mentally, had survived her husband only a little more than a year. The prince was not at all like his elder brother. He had always been hard to control, and as he grew into manhood his vicious traits of character developed. His conduct was so atrocious that the king sent him out of the kingdom for a time with the

hope that a few years' travel in foreign countries would make him a better man.

But, instead of better, Prince Fritz returned home worse. He gathered around him a band of followers and with them he used to scour the country, destroying at times the property of the king's subjects in the small villages of Schlafenland and causing much misery. These acts brought shame upon the king and disturbance throughout the country. At last they became so common that Prince Fritz was banished from the kingdom and the king declared that if he was found in the country again he would be imprisoned.

But the prince knew the merciful character of his brother, and he was so sure King Rudolph would not carry out this threat that he often boldly violated the law and used sometimes to be seen galloping wildly on his fleet black horse through parts of Schlafenland, followed by his reckless band. Once he even met the king and queen as they were driving in the country. He dashed past them with a wild laugh, and

the king looked fierce and the queen shuddered and turned her head away.

So it was not surprising that they dreaded the thought of Prince Fritz succeeding to the throne and prayed for a son, for the laws of the kingdom declared that a woman never could be ruler of the country.

CHAPTER VI.

HE poor little Princess Margarethe pined away in her grand palace. Dark rims appeared under her big wondering eyes and her face grew paler and paler.

Her only companions were her dolls. She had a great many dolls, but she was fond of only one of them. This one was named Stradella, after a little girl in the story-book the nurse used to read to her. Stradella was a big doll with blue eyes and long flaxen hair. Though she looked robust she really was very delicate and the princess had great trouble in taking care of her. One of her most remarkable qualities was her extreme drowsiness. She could keep her eyes open only when she sat up straight. The other dolls seemed never to sleep at all and they made the princess nervous with their continual staring. Stradella was dressed three times a day in

the most wonderful dresses, and every afternoon she had to be put to bed. She always seemed to Margarethe to look quite ill whenever by chance she missed her afternoon sleep.

But though Stradella was a great care, she was also a great comfort; for the princess used to hold long conversations with her about all her troubles. She never used to say much in reply, but she always listened with great sympathy. It was only at night, when Margarethe lay in her bed with the doll in her arms that Stradella consented to converse at length. Then she would speak quite volubly and in the mildest voice. The princess could not understand why Stradella preferred to talk at night, when both were very tired, rather than in the daytime, but supposed it was because she was a little bashful in the presence of others.

Margarethe's chief delight was to watch the children playing beneath her window. At first they did not dare to make signs to her because they feared her as a great princess; then when they saw she was like

other little girls and did not seem to be proud, they used to smile and bow to her, and she always smiled and bowed to them in return. They soon began to pity her, for they could see the wistful look in her eyes and they noticed she was growing pale. They consulted together as to whether it would be right to beckon her to join them in their games, but they decided that as she was a princess such an invitation would not be proper. So the little princess, who at a call from them would have responded eagerly and made an effort to escape from her prison, was left alone.

One day, when she was nearly four years old, she surprised her nurse by saying, "Why doesn't my queen mamma love me like you do?"

The nurse replied, "Your mamma, Margarethe, does love you, but she has a great many things to attend to; so she doesn't have time to see her little girl so often as other mammas do."

"But why doesn't my papa love me? Doesn't he have time, either, 'cause he's a

king? He never comes to see me an' he's cross whenever he meets me in the garden."

The nurse tried to divert the princess from these questions, but she could not make her forget them and they were frequently repeated. One day, while they were being asked for the hundredth time, the old woman with the wizened face entered the room. Margarethe no longer felt terror at her god-mother's approach, but could not conceal her aversion for the old princess, who therefore disliked her the more and treated her as sharply as she dared.

"Why is it your mamma doesn't love you?" she exclaimed in her cracked voice, as she approached Margarethe. "I'll tell you, my dear. It's simply because you're not a boy. Your mamma and papa wanted a boy and you came instead. Don't you see? So now your Uncle Fritz will get the throne when your father dies. No wonder they don't love you!"

Then, feeling she had said enough to make her god-child unhappy for the rest of the day, she hobbled out the room.

Margarethe, who was sitting in her seat by the window, stared at the retreating figure of the old princess, her eyes open wider than ever. Then she looked at the nurse for an explanation of the words she had just heard.

"Mamma," she whispered, in a half-frightened voice, "is what Aunt Wilhelmina said true?"

The nurse did not speak for a moment. Then she replied:

"Yes, dear child, it is true. You must know it some time, but I wish you had heard it in a different way."

Margarethe turned her face toward the window and looked at the children below, who were playing games and laughing loud in their enjoyment. For a long time she was silent. Then she turned to the nurse and said in a curious, plaintive voice:

"It's such a hard thing to be a princess."

After that day she seemed more absorbed than ever in her bewildering thoughts. For hours she would sit by the window with a strange expression in her eyes, as if she were thinking of things far away. Life puzzled

her so. She knew there was something wrong about it and she wanted to discover what this was. But she never could find a clue to the riddle.

At times when she closed her eyes she would have the most wonderful fancies. She used to imagine she was floating in the air, and that she went high up among the clouds. There she met the beautiful cloud-spirits dressed in robes of finest texture, woven with the most delicate colors in the rainbow. These cloud-spirits floated all day in the sun, and at night they bathed in the dew and slept on cloud-banks. Their lives would have been perfectly happy but for their terror of the god of lightning and the demon of thunder, who always followed close behind him.

They used to tell the princess in terrified whispers of these awful creatures that would come at night, when they were sleeping peacefully, and sweep through their realms on great chariots yoked with wingèd, fire-breathing horses. And on stormy nights, when the tempest roared around the stone palace, the

princess, lying in her canopied bed, would sometimes awake and in her imagination see these monsters tearing through the black sky and she would feel the deepest pity for her frightened cloud-spirit friends.

She often spoke to the nurse about these beautiful beings, but Johanna seemed not to care to talk about them. She said she never had seen any herself, and when the princess asked her if she didn't think they must get very cold sometimes, sleeping all night out in the open air, she was at a loss to reply. After some deliberation, however, she said they probably were used to it and wouldn't care to live in houses even if they could.

"I think I'd rather live in the clouds," said the princess, thoughtfully. "It can't be half so tiresome as being shut up in a house all the time, 'specially in a palace."

A few days after this conversation took place, Margarethe surprised the nurse by saying:

"Do you s'pose the pretty people that live in the clouds is angels?"

Johanna did not reply for a moment.

Her thoughts had always been of the simplest character, and the fancies of the princess filled her with a kind of awe. Finally, she said:

"No, dear, I don't believe they are. Angels live in heaven."

"But didn't you tell me that heaven was up in the sky? An' the clouds is in the sky."

The nurse was in a difficulty again.

"Well, yes, I did," she answered, after a pause. "But I meant that heaven was way up in the sky, way up beyond the clouds."

"Oh!" exclaimed the princess, thoughtfully. She reflected upon the nurse's words for a few moments. Then she said: "P'raps if the pretty people in the clouds isn't angels they're getting ready to be angels."

"Perhaps so," replied the nurse.

"Then I hope I'll be an angel some time, so as to live in the clouds first."

For a little while she thought of this delightful possibility; then her face darkened: an unpleasant idea had occurred to her.

"Are there any princesses in heaven, mamma?" she asked, in an anxious tone.

"No, dear," the nurse replied. "All the people in heaven are God's children. But there are no kings or queens or princesses there."

This answer seemed to please her and she uttered a sigh of relief.

"HE GAZED AT THE SLEEPING INFANT FOR A MOMENT."

CHAPTER VII.

EVERY year Prince Fritz grew more lawless and more contemptuous of public opinion. The king was continually hearing of his wild acts. At times the prince and his men would rob whole hamlets, and then set fire to them and ride exultingly away.

The peasantry, who at first were patient with him because he was their greatest prince and might some day be their king and treat them the more cruelly for displaying their wrath against him, began to declare it was not right that such a man should ever be permitted to rule over them. The more they talked about it the bolder they became, and at last their words reached the ears of the king.

"The people are asking, sire," said the Duke of Babrantino to him one day, "why they should endure the chance of having

Prince Fritz succeed you if Providence should take you from them."

The old duke had been the friend and the trusted adviser of the king's father and no one in the country was more esteemed than he and no counsel was deemed more worthy than his.

Now these words pleased the king greatly, for of late he had been thinking of a plan by which Prince Fritz might be kept from the throne. The laws of the country declared that no daughter of the king could ever rule the country; but if the people demanded that the law be changed, it might easily be done.

So he told the duke his plan, which had already been approved by the queen, for making the Princess Margarethe his successor. The duke also approved it warmly, and said that the people would sanction the change in the law.

It was decided between them to bring the matter before the king's council. This council, composed of six of the leading statesmen of Schlafenland, always advised the king with

regard to the more important affairs of the country, and decided, with the king's sanction, what measures should be brought before the people. But their real power was slight, for they always acted in accordance with the wishes of the ruler. Only once in the history of Schlafenland had they defied the king's will. That was when the whole people rose up against the tyranny of Wenzil the Tyrant.

The princess was happily unconscious of her father's intention to make her a great queen some day. Though the nurse heard of it she was careful to conceal it from Margarethe, for she knew that as Margarethe found it hard to be a princess, she would be terrified at the thought of becoming a queen.

About this time a wonderful plan was shaping itself in the mind of the princess. She confided it to no one but Stradella, and even to Stradella she dared speak of it only after bed-time. The doll gave it her approval, and for many nights they discussed it until they heard the city clock striking hour after hour, and they both fell sound asleep from utter weariness.

Margarethe's plan was simply to run away from the palace some afternoon, across the big hill that she had often gone over in the carriage, and to play with the little girls she had seen there. She never thought of the unhappiness this would cause the nurse; she thought only of the delight Stradella and she should have in escaping from their prison, and, for once in their lives, doing as other little girls did.

So, one warm spring afternoon, when the birds were chirping and building their nests in the trees in front of the palace, and the grass looked so soft and green that she wanted to run out and roll upon it, the princess confided to Stradella that she thought the time had come. The nurse had been suddenly called to the queen's apartment. Not a sound could be heard.

Margarethe's resolve was quickly taken. She clasped Stradella tightly in her arms, and without stopping even to put on a hat, she darted into the great corridor of the palace. She stepped noiselessly down the steps and out into the garden. She looked quickly

around; no one was to be seen — not even the guard that usually paced to and fro in front of the great iron gateway. She ran breathlessly to the gate. It was closed!

The guard lay near by on a mound of soft grass, sound asleep. He was a long, thin young man with a smooth face and hollow cheeks and a large nose, and as he lay with his mouth wide open he looked very comical. But the princess was too agitated to think of his looks; she could think only of the means by which she might escape through the gate. She stood still for a moment and gazed helplessly about her. She knew that it would be impossible for her to move the heavy portal. She could have cried for disappointment. Then she noticed a small door within the portal; perhaps she could escape through that!

She ran to it and tried with all her might to turn the handle. At first it did not move; then it turned a little. She pushed hard against the door; it yielded, opened — she was free!

She did not stop to close the door again;

she did not stop even to look around, but she flew up the deserted road toward the hill. Only a few of the children playing in front of the palace noticed a little girl with a white scared face, running at full speed, her yellow hair streaming behind her, and clasping in her arms a big wax doll.

CHAPTER VIII.

HE broad driveway leading from the palace gate ran for a short distance along the high-road and then turned in a sharp curve up the steep hill that overlooked the city. The first thought of the princess was to escape from this road where she knew she should be likely to meet some one that would perhaps recognize her. So she hastened along the driveway and began slowly, but as swiftly as her expiring breath would permit, to mount the hill. She never before realized how steep the hill was, and as she ran she felt pity for the poor horses that so often had dragged her to the top in the heavy carriage.

When, after a long time, she arrived at the place where she could see the city stretched out before her, and the broad, green plains covered with trees and shrubs and cut into with the queer snake-like lines

of the stream, she sat down exhausted beneath an old shady elm tree. Her breath came so fast that she feared she might never catch it again, and she grew frightened. Her face was so hot that she put one hand to her cheeks, hoping in that way to cool them a little. But her hands were hot, too. Then she did not know what to do, and she could do nothing but sit, making little gasps and pressing Stradella convulsively to her breast.

As for Stradella, her calmness was wonderful. She did not gasp for breath and her cheeks were as cool as when she was sleeping peacefully during her afternoon nap. As Margarethe found herself regaining her breath she looked at Stradella with admiration. Such composure, she felt sure, did not belong to an ordinary doll.

It must have been nearly a quarter of an hour before the princess was quite recovered, and even when she breathed quietly again she felt nervous and flurried. She looked down at the great stone palace, towering majestically far above the highest tree-

top. Everything seemed to be quiet there; her flight surely had not as yet been discovered. She wondered if the guard were still asleep and she hoped no one would come to wake him because he was such a nice man and it was so hard for him to have to walk up and down all day long carrying a big, heavy gun, and he always seemed so tired, like Stradella.

This thought made the princess look down at Stradella. The doll had slipped from her arms and was lying in her lap, fast asleep. "Poor Stradella!" she said. "That awful run up the hill has tired her out, too."

Just then she thought she heard a noise. She turned around quickly and discovered a band of horsemen coming up the hill by the road that led from the centre of the town and crossed the road from the palace near the very spot where she was sitting.

The princess was terrified. She seized Stradella in her arms, stood up and looked nervously around for a place of escape.

In the centre of the square, formed by the meeting of the roads, was a large granite statue of a majestic-looking man in military

dress, seated on a prancing war-horse. The figure represented King Wilhelm, Margarethe's grandfather. The horsemen rode rapidly toward the princess, and she saw that they were going to pass directly in front of the statue; so her only means of keeping herself from being seen was by hiding behind it.

She ran swiftly to the pedestal and crouched on the ground. Her heart beat fast as the quick steps of the horses clattered on the hard earth. For a moment she did not dare to move. Then she felt curiosity to see the riders. She was quite sure she should not be observed if she peered out from behind the statue. She tried to look over the pedestal, but it was higher than her head. Then she tried to look over it by jumping; still it was too high. She discovered, however, that by holding Stradella in her left hand she could lift herself up with her right and, by standing on the block of granite at the base, obtain a glimpse of the horsemen. So, seizing Stradella tightly around the waist with one arm, she clung to the edge of the stone with the other and,

placing her foot firmly on the base, she raised herself up until her head was above the pedestal. She could peer through the open space between the legs of the horse and see the faces of the riders.

There were about twenty-five of them. At their head rode a large, fierce-looking man with a very red face and black eyes that seemed to shoot fire with every glance, and with a long, flowing black beard that reached nearly to his waist. Though Margarethe never had seen him before, she recognized him as Prince Fritz, for she had often heard of his red face and his fierce eyes and his long, black beard. His life of dissipation had made him look very much older than he really was. Margarethe was struck by the resemblance between him and the Princess Wilhelmina. She trembled all over as she looked at him. The nurse had told her enough about her uncle to make her regard him as the wickedest man in the world and the one that would do her most harm if she fell into his power.

The princess did not dare to move from

her hiding-place until the clattering of the horses' hoofs died away in the distance and the horsemen disappeared in the slope of the hill. None of them had seen the little figure crouching at the top of the pedestal and peering with pale, anxious face through the horse's legs.

The first thought of the princess after climbing down from the pedestal was to scamper back to the palace as fast as possible. Then she stood for a moment undecided what to do. On the one hand was the danger of encountering Prince Fritz; on the other the fascination of playing with the little girls. The terror of the danger passed away soon after the vanishing of the horsemen, and the thought of the little girls made their attractions all the greater in her mind. Besides, she felt thoroughly rested now and able to continue her journey.

So she started to run again through the grass toward the river. She remembered a certain spot on the river bank where she had often seen some little girls playing, and she resolved to go there at once. She flew

lightly over the elastic turf until she noticed a strange, rattling sound that came from Stradella. She looked down at the sleeping doll in her arms and noticed that Stradella's eyes kept twitching in a most remarkable way. She felt quite alarmed.

"All this 'citement must have made Stradella sick," she said. "I must stop an' let her rest a little while till she's better."

So she sat down beside a clump of shrubs. She was relieved to notice that the rattling ceased as soon as she placed Stradella on a soft bit of grass and allowed her to sleep.

"It was very thoughtless of me," she whispered to herself, as she smoothed Stradella's yellow hair tangled by the wind, "not to think of her nap. I might have remembered that she never's well when she doesn't have it."

The princess allowed Stradella to rest for nearly a quarter of an hour and she sat quietly by her side. At the end of this time she was very impatient to join the little girls whom she could see playing in the distance. So once more she gathered the doll in her arms and started for the bank.

CHAPTER IX.

T the river bank the princess found five little girls making mud pies. They were so absorbed in their occupation that they did not notice Margarethe's appearance, and as she was too timid to go up and speak to them until they gave some sign of encouragement, she stood motionless for several minutes, watching them wistfully.

At last the oldest of the group looked up: a large, fat girl, with blue eyes that had a glassy look like Stradella's and with a thin, stiff braid of brown hair standing out straight from the back of her head. When she saw Margarethe she stared with such surprise and wonder that the princess did not know what to do. Then, after a moment, the girl exclaimed:

"Well, where did *you* come from?"

The other girls turned their attention from

their pies and when they discovered Margarethe they, too, stared at her. The princess did not move; she was afraid she was going to cry.

"She hasn't got any tongue," cried the big girl with the dull eyes. "She hasn't got any tongue any more than her doll has."

Margarethe was not troubled by the remark about herself, but she resented the remark about Stradella.

"'Scuse me," she said, "my doll *has* got a tongue."

"Who ever heard of a doll that had a tongue?" exclaimed the big girl, contemptuously. "I don't believe your doll's got a tongue, though she is dressed up so fine."

Margarethe stepped forward and held out the face of the doll to the girl. "There," she cried, "see if she hasn't got a tongue."

And, sure enough, through the little opening between Stradella's lips could be seen the smallest bit of a tongue.

The girl heaved a long sigh.

"Yes, she cert'nly has a tongue," she acknowledged. "But this is the first time I've

ever seen a doll that had one." Then she asked, "Can she talk?"

"Oh, yes," replied Margarethe earnestly, "she talks very nice, an' she has the sweetest voice. But she doesn't talk much daytimes, only nights."

The children all looked with wonder at the doll and then at the princess.

"Well," said one of them in a long whisper, a little girl with a round head of brown curls and with rosy cheeks and sparkling brown eyes, "that's the wonderfulest doll I ever heard of."

"I've got a doll, too," said the big girl, boldly, "but it hasn't any tongue, an' it can't talk, an' it isn't dressed up in fine clothes."

"Oh, let me see it, do!" cried Margarethe, her face lighted up with eagerness.

"I think I won't," said the girl calmly, putting her right hand behind her back, where the doll was concealed in her left.

For a moment the children whispered together and at the same time cast suspicious glances at Margarethe. Then they began to gather up the sticks with which they had been making their mud pies.

"Going away?" asked the princess, appealingly.

"Yes," said the big girl, as if surprised by the question.

The girls gathered in a group and cast strange glances at Margarethe, as if she were a curiosity.

"We don't play with girls dressed up so fine as you," said the big girl, looking critically at the clothes of the princess and then at the bewildering finery that Stradella wore.

The expression of Margarethe's eyes showed she was hurt by this remark.

"I can't help it," she said. "I'd much rather be dressed like you. It's a great deal nicer, I'm sure."

"You'd rather be dressed like us!" cried the big girl, with a laugh that showed she thought Margarethe very foolish to wish such a thing. "Well, what a funny child you are!"

Just then two little boys who had been playing in another part of the meadow came up. One was a tall, handsome, brown-faced lad of nine; the other, about three years younger, was puny and pale and had little

weak blue eyes. When the smaller one saw Margarethe he whispered in a frightened voice:

"Why, it's the princess!"

"The princess!" the little girls exclaimed in a breath. Then they shrank away from Margarethe, and the expression of amazement in their faces grew deeper.

The princess stood still, as if she had been accused of doing something wicked and did not know what to say. Then, seeing that the girls kept shrinking farther and farther away, she cried:

"It isn't my fault 'cause I'm a princess. I wouldn't be a princess if I could help it, an' I'm very sorry, I really am. I'd much rather be just like you, just like other little girls."

The children looked at one another in helpless wonder. They never had seen any one like Margarethe before, and they did not know what to make of her.

"Well," said the big girl, after a long silence, "I s'pose if you don't want to be a princess an' you've got to be one, 'tisn't your fault."

"But I should think it would be lovely—oh, just lovely!" gasped a little girl with a wise, peaked face that looked very much older than her body. "I'd rather be a princess than anything else in the world—'cept a queen. Think of all the fine things she must have."

"Do you have plum pudding every day?" asked the big girl, trying to conceal her curiosity under an air of superiority.

The princess shook her head.

"My mamma won't let me eat it," she replied. "She says it's bad for little folks."

"Pooh!" cried the big girl; "I've had it lots of times and it never hurt me. I wouldn't be a princess if I couldn't have plum pudding every day."

"Nor I," said the little one with the curls.

"Nor I," chirped the rest of the girls in chorus, with the exception of the little girl with the wise face. She could not believe it wasn't such a fine thing to be a princess, after all, and she exclaimed excitedly:

"But she must have lots of other nice things, lots of candy an' cake."

Margarethe shook her head again.

"Sometimes my god-papa brings me candy," she said, "but my mamma doesn't like to have me eat it, 'cause, she says, it's bad for my teeth."

"Your mamma's the queen, isn't she?" asked the big girl quite familiarly. She had recovered from the awe she had at first felt in the presence of a princess, when she saw the princess seemed to be quite like other people.

"Well, yes," replied Margarethe, hesitatingly, "she's one of my mammas, but she isn't the one I mean. I mean the mamma that takes care of me—my nice mamma."

The eyes of the little girls began to open wide again.

"So you've got two mothers," the one with the wise face gasped. "Do all princesses have two mothers?"

Then Margarethe was obliged to explain quite elaborately how she happened to have two mammas: how her mamma, the queen, was so busy that she didn't have time to attend to a little girl and how her mamma,

the nurse, attended to her instead. But it took her such a long time to say this and she had to make so many explanations before the little girls could understand it, that she felt very well acquainted with them when she finished.

The girl with the wise face looked disappointed. "I don't believe it's so nice to be a princess after all," she said. "I want my own mother to take care of me; I'd rather have her than anybody else."

"I'm glad that Amalia isn't a princess," piped the puny boy, looking at the big girl, "an' I'm glad I'm not a prince."

The big girl looked down at him and then turned to Margarethe and said proudly: "This is my brother. His name is Hermann. You haven't got a brother, have you?"

Margarethe was obliged to confess that she had not, but she should like to have one. Then she told the little girls how lonely she was in the big stone palace: how she never had any other little girls to play with, and how stupid it was to be a princess, and how she had run away that afternoon in

order to find companions. And they all felt so sorry for her that they told her they didn't blame her for being a princess, and that as she didn't want to be one, and wouldn't be one if she could help it, they would let her play with them. So they all sat down together in the mud, and Amalia allowed Margarethe to hold her rag doll, named Rose — the most beautiful doll in the world, except Stradella, it seemed to Margarethe — and Amalia was permitted to take Stradella in her arms. And for the first time in her life the princess felt perfectly happy.

CHAPTER X.

JOHANNA was obliged to wait in the ante-room to the royal apartments for more than an hour before she was called into Queen Louisa's presence. She had so much to say to the queen, and the queen had so many orders to give about the princess — who would have to be seen in public more often in future, since she would probably be queen herself some time — that nearly two hours had passed when she returned to Margarethe's apartments.

She was terrified not to see the princess in her usual seat by the window. She hurried from room to room, and when she found all the rooms empty she ran out into the garden and sought under the trees and the arbors, thinking that Margarethe had gone out alone for her usual afternoon walk. Then she asked the guard if he had seen the

princess; but of course he had not, for he had just waked up from his long sleep.

The poor woman wrung her hands with grief. A terrible thought came to her: perhaps Prince Fritz — who surely had heard of the plans that were being made to keep him from the throne — had come to Schlafenburg with his band and secretly carried off the princess. She ran breathlessly into the palace again and gave the alarm.

The story of Margarethe's disappearance quickly reached the ears of the king and queen. They both appeared before the nurse, the king with his face more rigid than ever and with a fierce light in his eyes, and the queen white and trembling. When the nurse told them how she had missed the princess and had searched for her in vain, the king's eyes flashed with anger:

"You are to blame for this, woman!" he cried, fiercely. "You should not have let the child go out of your sight. If any misfortune happens to her I will hold you accountable."

It was quite evident that, in his wrath, even the just king could forget to be just.

"Do not blame her," said the queen. "It is I, if anyone, who should be punished." Then she told the king how she had detained the nurse in her apartments, and the princess had disappeared in Johanna's absence.

"But what can have become of the child?" cried the king furiously. He had grown very pale and there was a white circle around his lips.

"Prince Fritz and his men were seen tearing through the outskirts of the city only two hours ago," murmured one of the courtiers, timidly. All the courtiers feared the king in anger.

The same thought flashed through the mind of everyone in the group around the king and queen.

"Ring the bell and rouse the whole city," cried the king. "Order the guard to be in readiness to follow me, and give orders to General von Blomberg to scour the country until the child is found. If Fritz has carried off the princess it will go hard with him. I have shown him too much mercy already."

In a moment the iron bell of the palace clashed and clanged; there was something terrible in its very sound, as if the fierce spirit of the king had entered into it. Then followed a clattering of feet along the stone floors of the palace and the rumbling of eager preparation. The news of the flight of the princess spread rapidly through the city; in an almost incredible time crowds of people were hurrying to and fro through the streets to join in the search.

In a few moments King Rudolph, mounted on his black charger, dashed out of the court-yard, followed by a band of fifty men, all of them heavily armed and dressed in scarlet coats. By the king's side rode one who had seen Prince Fritz pass through the town and had observed the route the prince had taken. He therefore served as guide. The horsemen galloped over the steep road and then up the hill along the path where Margarethe had seen the prince pass two hours before. A crowd of men and boys with a few women among them tried to follow, but they soon abandoned the effort to keep the horses in

sight, and contented themselves with running in the same direction.

The king had left orders that squadrons of troops should be despatched at full speed to all the roads leading from the city so that there should be no road by which Prince Fritz could pass without being overtaken. For the next hour, band after band of horsemen swept up the hill and through the town. But as none of them thought of scouring the meadows and river bank, their search was vain.

The squadron under General von Blomberg, commander-in-chief of the troops of the realm, was stationed at the top of the high hill, waiting for the bugle-cry that was to be sounded on the finding of the princess. The general, who thought he might be obliged to do battle with Prince Fritz for the possession of the princess, had chosen this central position in order to be ready to turn in any direction and hasten to the scene of the struggle, wherever it might be. Though he knew which road the prince had taken, he did not consider it best to follow the king

there, for he believed that Fritz might have changed his course after leaving the town in order to throw his pursuers off the track.

But at last, when an hour had passed, his patience became exhausted. His warlike spirit made him long for action. So he took the long field-glasses that he carried under his arm, and from his horse he swept with them the wide plain below. He could see no trace of the prince and his band on the green turf, or lying concealed beneath the thick shrubbery that covered it here and there. He saw only a group of little children playing by the bank of the stream; they were so absorbed by what they were doing that they could have heard nothing of the excitement in the city.

Suddenly a strange thought struck him. It made him blush through his weather-beaten skin. He passed the glasses to a handsome young officer with long flowing moustaches like the king's and said to him:

"Your eyes are better than mine, lieutenant. Look at that bend in the stream where

the two arms of the river come together, and tell me what you see."

The officer did as he was bidden and, without taking the glasses from his eyes, he replied:

"I see a group of little children. They seem to be playing in the mud. There are eight of them, I think. Let me count—yes, eight."

He took the glasses from his eyes. The two men looked steadily at each other for a moment with a curious expression in their faces. Then the general put spurs to his horse and, ordering his men to follow him, dashed down the hill, over the soft grass and through the bushes and brambles, toward the very spot where the children were sitting.

When the squadron had gone a little more than half way down the hill the children looked up and saw them coming. Some of them cried out in terror. Then they all scrambled to their feet and ran like startled deer, the hair and the dresses of the girls streaming behind them in the wind—all but one, a little girl that stood with white face

and timid blue eyes watching the horsemen approach her, the Princess Margarethe.

Her cheeks and nose were smeared with mud and her dress was covered with mud. She had taken off her shoes and stockings and her little feet were imbedded in mud up to her ankles. Around her were the soft, smooth mud-pies that she had shaped so lovingly with her fingers. Beside her lay Amalia's rag doll.

She was so fascinated by the sight of the horsemen, who were rapidly coming nearer and nearer, that she did not see her beautiful Stradella lying where Amalia, in her haste to escape, had dropped her, flat on her face, in the centre of a big mud-pie.

The general was the first to reach her. She recognized him when he came near, for she had seen him in the garden and he had often thrown kisses up to her as she sat in her window. She knew he would not hurt her. So she was not afraid any more, but she felt embarrassed at being in the presence of a man in her bare feet. However, she decided that she ought, at any rate, to be

polite; and when he reined his horse before her, she said:

"Good afternoon, Gen'ral."

For a moment the general seemed too surprised to speak. Then he cried in his big, gruff voice, that seemed to come from the depths of his long top-boots:

"Well, I declare. It's you, is it? Do you know what a commotion you've started in the city?"

Though his voice was rough, his words did not sound at all severe. So the little princess replied simply:

"No, sir."

The rest of the squadron had come up by this time, and the troop of restless horses, biting at their bits, pawing the ground, and swishing their tails, and of horsemen, stood before the princess, the general at their head. The men seemed to be trying not to laugh. Margarethe wondered why their eyes twinkled so.

"The whole city's out hunting for you," roared the general. "The people think you've been carried off."

"I'm very sorry," said the princess, "but I just came out to play with some nice little girls."

"Well, the only thing for you to do," roared the general again, "is to come up here on my saddle and go back to the palace with me. Karl, give the princess a lift."

A young fellow with a smiling, boyish face, leaped from his horse and approached Margarethe. Before he had time to take her in his arms, she cried:

"Oh, Stradella, poor Stradella! I almost forgot her. An' my shoes, too."

She turned and uttered a cry of distress when she found Stradella lying in the mud. She ran to the doll and lifted her up. Stradella's half-closed eyes were so full of mud that she could not open them, but peered out of them with a look that was pathetic in its vacancy.

"Poor Stradella!" cried the princess with a strong effort to keep back her tears. She thought it would not be proper to cry before soldiers, especially before the general;

so, pressing the doll close to her breast with one hand and holding her shoes in the other, she was lifted into the general's arms and placed in front of him on his saddle.

The general's horse was turned toward the city and began slowly to move forward. Then the princess suddenly exclaimed:

"Oh, stop. I've forgotten something. Amalia's doll, I must have Amalia's doll. It's down there on the grass."

The horsemen turned around.

"Get the doll, Karl," cried the general, with his good-natured roar.

Karl leaped from the saddle again, took the doll from the grass, placed it in the arms of the princess, jumped on his horse, and the squadron pranced gaily across the meadow. And seated on the saddle in front of the general the Princess Margarethe, half covered with mud and with the two dolls and her two little shoes in her arms, rode back to the palace.

CHAPTER XI.

A HORSEMAN had gone ahead of the squadron to inform the queen of the finding of the princess and thus to relieve her mind. She had been made ill with grief and anxiety, but when she heard that Margarethe had not been carried off by Prince Fritz, but had run away of her own accord, her grief suddenly changed to indignation.

"The princess shall be punished for this," she cried. "She has brought ridicule upon us. How Fritz and his wretched companions will laugh at our folly in creating such a disturbance for nothing. We shall be the sport of the whole country."

The nurse, however, who had been weeping ever since she discovered the disappearance of the princess, wept anew for joy at the news of Margarethe's return. Relief from her fears made it impossible for her to feel angry with the little girl. Her only

cause for sorrow lay in the possibility that the king, in his indignation with her, might take the princess from her care.

When the old general at the head of his squadron appeared before the entrance to the palace, the princess perched in front of him, the queen and the nurse and all the ladies of the court, among them the Princess Wilhelmina, were waiting to receive him. The old woman, who seemed more wizened and vindictive than ever, could not conceal her malignant joy at Margarethe's discomfiture. The little princess was frightened by the severe looks of the queen, who did not try to hide her anger and shame at the spectacle before her. But the smiling face of the nurse reassured her. After the strong but gentle arms of Karl swung her down from the saddle, she pattered up the marble steps. She had to pass the queen before she could reach the nurse. When she saw the frown on her mother's face, she approached her timidly and said:

"I'm very sorry."

The queen looked down on the soiled

figure with disgust. "Take her away, Johanna," she said.

The princess turned to the nurse and threw herself sobbing in her arms. The queen, after speaking a few words to the general, stepped aside coldly, and the nurse carried the princess back to her apartment.

There Margarethe soon recovered from her outburst of grief. She had a great deal to say about her experiences of the afternoon, but she was so tired that she could scarcely speak. She was therefore quickly put to bed and in a few moments, with the two strangely different dolls in her arms, she fell fast asleep.

Messengers had been sent out by all the roads leading from the city to summon back the squadrons that had gone in pursuit of Prince Fritz. And in the evening, long after the sun went down, they swept gaily through the town. The soldiers regarded the flight of the princess and the circumstances connected with it as a fine jest and they made merry over it.

But the king's wrath was terrible to see. He had been unable to find the hiding-place

of Prince Fritz, who, after riding a dozen miles from the city, seemed to have disappeared from the earth, and when the messenger, after tearing post-haste from the palace, told him of Margarethe's safety, instead of showing great joy at the news, he burst into such violent language against the princess, that the soldiers around him could not help showing by their looks that they thought he was too severe.

Then, after his outburst, all the way back to the palace, the king spoke not a word. He was thinking bitterly of the malignant joy Prince Fritz would take in the story of the afternoon's adventures. When he reached the palace he went at once to the apartments of the queen and for hours they talked together, and made plans to keep the little princess in stricter confinement than ever.

Late that night the people stood in the streets and talked over the startling events of the day. Bands of them had followed the king's men along the highways and many were tired out with the pursuit. But

they were, nevertheless, not too weary to hear and repeat the story of one another's experiences, and to make conjectures with regard to Margarethe's flight. The children, who thought they had committed a terrible crime by playing with the princess for which they might be punished by the king, told their parents the story and the parents repeated it to their neighbors, and these neighbors repeated it to other neighbors, and thus it spread all over Schlafenburg.

And the hearts of the people warmed to Margarethe. They said that she was a noble princess and fit to be their queen when she grew up, for she had a natural love for her subjects. Late that night they made a great bon-fire in the market-place and many times they cheered her name. And if the king and queen had not been shut up in their gloomy palace far out of hearing they would have heard the shouts:

"Long live the Princess Margarethe! Long live the daughter of the people! Long live our future queen!"

CHAPTER XII.

EARLY the next day the nurse received orders from the queen that the princess was never to be permitted to leave her sight, that she was to walk in the palace gardens only at certain hours of the day and for the present was not to be taken beyond the gates of the palace even for a drive. The king had wished to remove Margarethe from the charge of the nurse and place her under the care of some one else, but the queen, who knew that this would be a great grief both to the princess and to Johanna, persuaded him that it would be not only foolish but cruel as well.

So Margarethe, after her short freedom, felt her solitude harder to bear than ever. But she thought many times of the little girls and the memory of them was very precious to her. She was much troubled about Amalia's doll, for, as she did not know

where Amalia's home was, she could not return it. She hoped that one of the girls would come to play some day in the park in front of the palace; but, though she waited for several days, not one of them appeared. She could not understand why they did not come: it did not occur to her that they all were afraid of the king because they had committed the crime of playing with a princess and therefore did not dare go near the place where he lived. So Margarethe kept Amalia's doll and became almost as fond of it as she was of Stradella. She treated both dolls alike and Stradella seemed to be not at all jealous.

When the story of the princess' flight was brought to Prince Fritz by his spies in Schlafenburg, he and his men displayed as much joy over it as the king had supposed they would do. The prince had many friends at court: they consisted chiefly of those who hated King Rudolph's strict sense of justice, his merciless severity with public offenders, and his simple way of living, and who had contempt for his ambition to make his king-

dom great and his people happy. They believed that a king ought to spend all his days in the chase and in routs and carousing.

So they longed for the time when Prince Fritz should succeed to the throne, for they knew that the prince would do whatever they willed. They had raised a storm of indignation when they first heard of King Rudolph's plan to exclude the prince from the throne, and now they declared that a great injustice had been done their leader when he was suspected of carrying off the princess. They tried to sow seeds of sedition among the people by proclaiming that the king had an unnatural hatred for his half-brother and persecuted him unjustly. They even invented stories to show that the king had despised the prince ever since the day, when both were boys, Prince Fritz had defeated him in a wrestling bout during the public games. They defended the prince's crimes by saying that he committed them to retaliate upon his brother's persecutions, and that the king, therefore, deserved the blame for them.

It was suspected by those at the court who were faithful to the king that these calumnies had been started by the Princess Wilhelmina, who had an intense fondness for Prince Fritz, although he had always treated her with contempt, and hated the king in spite of the respect he always paid her. She had been a power in the court during the reign of Queen Maria, her sister, over whom she had exercised great influence, and she was bitterly disappointed to find that Queen Louisa would not permit her to interfere as she had done before.

It was to her hatred of the queen that much of her dislike of the king was due, though she never could forgive him for being so superior as he was to her favorite Fritz. It was known that after Prince Fritz was exiled she used to send him money, and it was reported that she used to have secret meetings with him at night and encourage him in his lawless life.

But these stories, in spite of their groundlessness and absurdity, spread rapidly and were believed by many people, even by some of those that were loyal to the king, and

gradually Prince Fritz became almost a martyr in their eyes. King Rudolph, though he was respected throughout Schlafenland for his justice and zeal and for the purity of his character, was feared for his unbending justice, which never granted mercy to offenders, and for his cold bearing. It was said among them that he was proud and that the queen, in spite of her strength and nobility of mind and her great charity, was prouder still.

When the reports circulated by the prince's friends reached the king, he was at first greatly angered and then deeply grieved. He concealed most of them from the queen, for he knew they would distress her. But he saw clearly that it would be a mistake for him then to propose to the people a change in the order of succession. He explained to the queen that he thought it best to wait for a few years before attempting to have the change made, and she agreed with him.

And the princess, quite unconscious of the disturbance she had started in the country, played with her dolls and wove her wonderful visions in the solitude of the palace.

CHAPTER XIII.

HERE was a certain room in the palace where the king and queen used to retire late in the afternoon when most of the duties of the day were over. Here for a time they would forget their cares and try to be happy in each other's society. The king had never lost the first love he had felt for the beautiful girl he had raised to the throne, and to that love was added an admiration for her strength of mind and for her talents that daily increased. She not only was his adviser but his supporter as well, for there were times when he seemed suddenly to lose courage and faith in himself and in his work. At these times the dauntless spirit of Queen Louisa would lift him from his depression and inspire him with new energy. He used to think that but for her all the plans he had made would fail and that he

"A STATELY OLD MAN ENTERED DRESSED IN THE RED COPE OF A CARDINAL."

never would have strength enough to conceive and carry out new ones.

One afternoon, after a long and trying day, during which he had received news of fresh atrocities of Prince Fritz, he came to this room and threw himself on the couch in front of the great wood fire that blazed and crackled on the hearth. The room was smaller than most of the rooms in the palace; it was at the top of one of the circular towers and was perfectly round. Its broad windows looked out on the city spread before it like a panorama.

The walls were covered with tapestries picturing valiant deeds of some of the kings of Schlafenland. One represented the noble Guthrun, founder of the royal line, leading his victorious troops against the Huns; another, Otto the Dauntless, fighting hand to hand with the pitiless Thorold, whose love of war was so great that nearly the whole of his life was spent amid scenes of slaughter, and whose knotted fingers now were clutching Otto's throat; a third revealed Thorold lying on the ground, his hand trying to hold back

the sword that had entered his breast and his face distorted with the agony of death, the victorious Otto standing over him.

The great tapestry above the fire-place, with its hosts of armored and heavy-armed men, riding great-haunched horses and surrounding a giant figure, with an iron crown, on the largest horse of all, was a picture of the coronation of the valiant Gottfried on the field of battle, after his victory over the faithless Count Wenmann, his father's Minister of State. The count had been made so proud and aspiring by the honors his master heaped upon him that he had tried to seize the crown for himself on King Julius' death.

The floor of the apartment was covered with skins, most of them skins of animals shot by Prince Rudolph long before he was made king and long before he had become so absorbed by cares of state that he was obliged to abandon almost wholly his favorite sport. The couch on which the king lay was covered with tiger skins, and even the great carved chairs had skins thrown upon them. The apartment represented the

huntsman far more than the peaceful ruler. Perhaps this was why the king was so fond of it.

As King Rudolph lay on the couch the light from the fire played about his head and illumined his clear-cut features and made them appear more than ever like the features on old coins. The flickering shadows deepened the look of dissatisfaction that marred somewhat the expression of his face. He seemed like one whose life had been poisoned by the gall of disappointment.

A long time he lay motionless, apparently absorbed in thought, his eyes half open. The light of the dying day disappeared in the west, and, as it sunk beneath the horizon, cast a pale glow through the palace windows. The darkness deepened, and the reflection of the flames in the fire leaped higher and higher on the walls and grew more brilliant. And the king's thoughts became strangely intermingled with the lights and shadows, and they wandered far away, and he knew not whether he slept or woke, and he had a strange vision, made either by

his dreams or by the weird creeping figures in the room.

At first he seemed to be enveloped in a black cloud. Then he glided down into a deep abyss; the motion so gentle that he felt no fear. At last he found himself in a dark cavern; he knew that it was a cavern though he could not see the stone walls that surrounded it. Gradually the place became partly illuminated. He looked around, but could see nothing but a high wall before him.

Presently on this wall appeared the shadow of a man; it grew larger and larger until it assumed gigantic proportions. The man wore a suit of armor with a great helmet on his head, and in his mailed hand he carried a heavy spear. And the king recognized the man as Guthrun, his illustrious ancestor, who after his conversion to Christianity had founded a Christian empire and devoted the rest of his life to doing battle with the heathen. With stately strides Guthrun stalked across the wall and disappeared in the darkness. And the king thought he

could hear the clanging of the armor as the shadow passed.

In a moment another shadow appeared. It was the figure of a sturdy-looking man, like the other, in armor, and mounted on a mail-clad horse; his jaw was set and his face rigid with determination. It was Otto the Dauntless, celebrated in history and story for his bravery against the Saracens, whom he fought in behalf of the True Cross, and never known to yield to any but his God. And the king thought he could hear the trampling of the horse as the shadow swept before him.

Then came Julius the Gentle, famed for his love of peace and for his wisdom as a law-maker. He it was who had reaped the harvest of prosperity that the brave deeds of Guthrun and Otto had sown. His brow was broad and his smooth face was as placid as a child's. He wore a long robe, like a monk's, and in his hand he carried a book. His figure glided noiselessly across the wall.

After Julius, appeared Gottfried the Giant. It seemed strange that the peace-loving king

should have had such a warlike son. It was Gottfried who had conquered all the wandering tribes around Schlafenland which had so harried his father that King Julius on two occasions had been driven to war with them and had at last united them to the kingdom. His massive figure, magnified in shadow, rose nearly to the top of the high wall and filled King Rudolph with awe. And as the figure stalked into the darkness the cavern seemed to tremble with the reverberation of its tread.

Then followed in quick succession Otto the Second, known for his terrible wars against the North-German tribes, during which Schlafenland very nearly fell into the power of the enemy, but was saved by the sacrifice of the king, who lost his life in a final effort to rout the enemy; Otto the Third, during whose peaceful reign the country grew in prosperity and in the cultivation of the arts; Max, who loved painting so passionately and gave such generous encouragement to it that all the artists in Europe flocked to Schlafenburg, and whose reign is forever com-

memorated by the masterpieces that now cover the walls of the churches; Max the Second, whose love of letters was as great as his father's love of painting, and who gave to the writers of Europe, many of whom were persecuted for their religious opinions, an asylum in his kingdom where they could write whatever they pleased.

And after these came a troop of kings, all of whom King Rudolph recognized from the portraits of his ancestors in the royal gallery, and all but one of whom, Wenzil the Tyrant, was known for some good service to his country. King Rudolph shuddered as the figure of Wenzil — a small man with a little round head and a cruel mouth, and a halting step as if one of his legs was weak and could not keep pace with the other — passed in the procession of shadows.

When the handsome figure of his grandfather, Wilhelm the Noble, appeared, dressed in robes of state, King Rudolph lowered his head reverently. He could faintly remember the old king, whom he had once seen at a great ceremonial when he was a child. And

when the figure of his father, Wilhelm the Good, seated on his horse followed, he could scarcely keep from crying out. There he stood as he so often had appeared in life, the good king who had taught his son by his actions and by his words that the greatest happiness in this world could be secured only by self-sacrifice. His shadow lingered on the wall longer than any of the others, and at last faded away.

As soon as it vanished another shadow appeared that filled King Rudolph with wonder, for before him stood a perfect outline of himself, dressed in the military uniform that he always wore in public and with his heavy sword in his hand. He felt as if he were looking at his soul, and he was filled with awe and wonder. He gazed at the figure with a kind of horrified fascination. Though he had recognized it at once, there was about it a sternness and pride of manner that gave it a forbidding character which he had supposed did not belong to him. Presently this shadow, like the others, disappeared.

Then for the first time the king realized the meaning of the shadows, and he watched eagerly for another to appear. But the light in the cavern grew dim, the wall seemed slowly to recede from him, and in a moment he was again plunged into darkness.

A feeling of horror seized him; he tried to cry out, but his lips could not move, and he lay like a man in a trance, conscious of all that was happening, but unable to stir. A cold sweat broke out on his brow and he uttered a deep groan. Strange sights and sounds filled his brain. The world seemed falling into chaos; everything was whirling rapidly around, and in the din he could distinguish cries of rage and anguish.

Presently the whirling began to subside, the noise grew less fearful, and finally ceased. Once more he was alone in the appalling silence and darkness.

It seemed to him that the darkness lasted a long time, but his agony may have made the time seem longer than it really was. Then out of its depths appeared a bright light that grew larger and larger and began

to take the shape of a child. Presently he recognized the child: it was the Princess Margarethe. She was dressed all in silver and gold, and her hair was of yellow flame, and her face of white flame, and her eyes of blue flame.

He was so amazed at her appearance that he could not speak, and he sat staring at her in wonder. She came nearer and held out her arms to him appealingly; but though he tried to take her hands he could not move to answer her appeal. Then a look of disappointment came into her face, and she faded back into the darkness. The king sat motionless.

In a few moments the light appeared again, and grew until it disclosed the figure of the princess; and again she approached the king appealingly. But he did not heed her, and she faded into darkness. Still the king sat motionless.

A third time the light appeared, and the little princess grew out of the flame and appealed once more to the king. And when he heeded her not, the look of disappointment

in her face was pitiable to see, and for the last time she was dissolved in the dark cloud.

Then the king made a great effort, struggling against the power that held him down, as a man tied with bonds struggles to be free. The blood rushed to his face and the blue veins in his neck swelled.

Then he sat up on the couch and opened wide his eyes, and he found the queen bending over him, stroking his hands and hair.

CHAPTER XIV.

AT first the king was so dazed that he could only look helplessly around the apartment and at the queen. He could not believe that he had dreamed what he had seen, for it was all too real. But there he was, on the couch in his room, where he had thrown himself a short time before. He glanced at the time-piece on the wall, and saw that he had been in the room only a few minutes. When he recovered himself, he asked the queen when she had entered.

"I had just come in when you awoke," she replied. "I found you lying on your back with your eyes half open. You must have been dreaming for you groaned and cried out."

He brushed his face with his right hand.

"I have had a strange vision," he said. Then when he thought of what he had passed through he put both hands over his eyes and whispered, "Oh, it was terrible."

He proceeded to tell her of the weird shadows of his ancestors. As he described to her the ghostly procession, she turned pale, but smiled and said carelessly :

"It was only a dream, Rudolph. It is absurd to think of it seriously. You have been worried by Prince Fritz and thinking too much about the succession."

"Ah," he replied, "to me the vision, or whatever it may have been, must have some meaning."

"What meaning can it have?" she asked, as if to her it could have none. She knew, however, what the answer would be.

"I cannot describe to you," he replied, with a look in his eyes that showed he was seeing the shadows again, "the horror that seized me after I saw my own figure pass away and no other succeed it. It seemed to me that everything fell into chaos. A terrible black pall enveloped me. By an indescribable power I thought I could see the country of my fathers, which you and I have labored for — I thought I could see it sinking in ruin."

"It is ridiculous to talk in this way," she cried petulantly. "How can you allow yourself to be disturbed by such superstitious fears?"

She spoke bravely, but her heart had sunk at his words. A fear lest his vision was prophetic took possession of her as it had taken possession of him.

"There is reason in my fear," he exclaimed. "Think of the work we have to do. Who will undertake it when we are gone? Prince Fritz longs for my death, so that he may have power to put a yoke of tyranny on the people."

"There is the princess," said the queen. "Perhaps when she grows up she will be able to carry on our work. The law may yet be changed."

"The princess!" repeated the king with a shudder, for the mention of her recalled that part of his vision of which he had not spoken. "No, we can hope for nothing from the princess."

Then he told the queen the rest of his dream. She had taken a seat on the couch

beside the king, and as he spoke she clasped her hands together in her lap and gazed into the flickering fire that bathed them both in its light. When he ceased speaking she breathed a long sigh.

"I cannot understand it," she said mournfully.

The darkness of the room, lit up by the weird, uncertain gleam of the fire, the earnestness and pathos of King Rudolph's manner, and the suffering that she herself had felt but concealed for so long a time, had thrown her into the king's dejected mood. She had to rouse herself in order to combat his melancholy.

"These fancies of yours, Rudolph," she said, "are caused merely by fatigue and worry. They will soon pass away. Let us try to think no more of them. We have done for our child all that could be done. We have had her tenderly cared for. If we have not cared for her ourselves it is because our station has given us other cares that are far greater."

"What care could be greater than the care

of parents for their children?" he exclaimed passionately. "Oh, Louisa, I begin to see it now—the truth of it all—the truth that I have been trying so long to discover. We have been blinded by our ambition; we have worked for our own glory, and foolishly imagined we were working for the good of others. But this will be our punishment: our work will perish like all the works of pride."

She looked at him wonderingly.

"I do not understand you, Rudolph," she said, at first coldly, her manner rapidly growing excited. "Have we not given our lives to the people? Have we not toiled night and day? Have we not borne burdens that the humblest of our subjects would refuse to bear? Have we not robbed ourselves of all pleasure—even of those simple pleasures that belong by right to the lives of the humblest—to forward our great work and leave behind us a kingdom that shall be a noble inheritance and a memorial to ourselves when we are gone?"

Her eyes flashed with enthusiasm, her pale cheeks flushed, and she raised her head so

that the fire-light fell upon her hair and glorified her.

"Yes," he cried bitterly, "we have done all this, but we have done it in the wrong spirit. It is not what one does that counts for goodness; it is the spirit that prompts the doing. A man may achieve the noblest deeds and yet be more base than the meanest of creatures. Ah, Louisa, we cannot purchase happiness by great deeds or by mock sacrifice, or by any kind of guile. Why should we think that we could escape the inevitable?"

She could not answer. She never before had known him to speak so passionately, or to be so agitated. She could only sit by his side with her head bowed over her clasped hands.

"See," he cried, after a moment's pause, pointing toward the window, through which, from the couch, they could observe Schlafenburg stretched before them, lit with a thousand lights. "Day after day I have stood at this window and looked on the city and envied the meanest of my subjects. 'My people

are happy,' I have said to myself. 'Why am I, who toil that their happiness may be secure, why am I not happy too?' And to-night for the first time I know the reason. It is because my heart has been hardened by ambition; because I have sought everything for myself under the miserable pretence that I have been seeking it for others; because I have wished for poor things when I might have had rich blessings; because I have been ungrateful for all the favors that have been showered upon me, and striven for the worthless rewards of the world. And what have I gained by it? Nothing but disappointment and misery."

He buried his face in his hands and remained for a long time motionless. The queen, who had sustained him in all his trials, felt incapable of supporting him in this. She could only sit clasping her hands in her weakness.

When the king had gained control of himself he went on more quietly:

"Louisa, we both have done wrong and we must try to repair our mistakes together. Though we have had everything to make us

happy; though we have loved and comforted each other, we have both suffered. But it is I who ought to bear the consequences alone, for I inspired you with the unworthy ambition that has been the curse of our lives."

She unclasped her hands nervously, and said with an effort to control her emotion:

"Do not blame yourself, Rudolph. I alone should be punished. I filled your mind with these dreams of false glory; I made you forget all that did not feed our selfish ambition. Oh, I see it now—the folly and the sin of it."

He rose from the couch and walked toward the window.

"Let us not give ourselves up to useless lamentations," he said; "but try to undo the evil that has been done—if it is not too late. Let us try to forget our pitiful dreams; they have caused us too much misery already."

"I see now," she went on, "how our ambition has eaten into our characters and poisoned our affections; and I see that your dream is a prophecy of the consequences we

have still to bear. Our sin has been too great to be expiated by our past suffering; our eyes have been opened only that our punishment may be the greater."

"Do not say that, Louisa," he replied. "Our eyes have been opened so that we may see the right path and tread it, cost what it may to us. Our child may be our salvation. Surely we could not complain if she were taken from us; we have shown ourselves unworthy of her."

For a long time they talked together; and as they viewed the past in the light of their new knowledge, all things appeared to them to take on a deeper meaning. At last, when their talk was over and they had made new plans for the future, they stood for a few moments gazing on the great city, thrilled by the emotions they had just experienced, and awed by the calm majesty of the night.

CHAPTER XV.

ARLY the next morning the princess sat in her seat by the window. Beside her were the two dolls. Stradella was dressed in one of her finest dresses — she had so many that it was a great problem to the princess each day to know which to select.

This one was of white satin, trimmed with delicate lace. Rose's dress, of pink silk ornamented with long pink ribbons, was also beautiful. It had formerly belonged to Stradella's wardrobe, but Stradella had generously given it to her new companion, whose only clothing when she was first taken into the palace was of the shabbiest kind. The effect of the pink silk on the rag doll was very curious. Those who saw it for the first time often smiled, but they never dared to smile before the princess, for she would have been greatly offended if she knew her doll was being ridiculed.

This morning Margarethe was giving the dolls a lecture. She always talked to them seriously. She knew they were very inexperienced, and had few opportunities to learn much about life; so she believed it was her duty to give them the benefit of her knowledge. They always seemed to be interested in what she said; that is, nearly always, for now and then Stradella's head would fall backward, her wax eyes would close, and before Margarethe could catch her, the big doll would be fast asleep. But to-day both dolls were wide awake, and the princess felt it was a good opportunity to tell them things they ought to know.

When she had smoothed Stradella's unruly locks, and placed a pillow behind her head so that the big doll could not possibly fall asleep, and when she had tried to make Rose look less uncomfortable (Rose always looked uncomfortable, with her little bits of blue eyes that never closed, and her strange, crooked nose and her long, irregular mouth) she arranged herself in her seat and began to talk. She was so absorbed

by what she was doing that she did not hear a step in the corridor, nor see the tall figure of a man who stood peering through the half-open door.

"You children," she began, "have no idea what a strange world this is. That's because you're dolls and can't go out by yourselves an' see all that's going on. But it's a very strange world—very strange."

Here she sighed and stopped for a moment as if to give the dolls time to take in the idea and to consider herself how strange the world was.

"Yes," she resumed, "if I should tell you just how strange it was I don't think you'd believe me. Now there's some folks think it's lovely to be a king an' queen or a princess. Of course you don't think so, 'cause you know how horrid it is. There's my papa, he has an awful hard time. He can't never come to see his little girl an' he can't never do what he wants to, but has to do just what other folks want him to do. That's 'cause he's a king. An' then my mamma—my mamma that's the queen, you know—she

can't come to see her little girl either; an' she must be so lonesome. An' then there's me—I'm a princess an' I can't go out an' play with other little girls, an' I can't have plum pudding like Amalia, an' I can't make nice pies down at the river, an' I can't do anything."

Here she stopped again for a moment to think of her sad state. She looked at the dolls and then out of the window where the children were passing on their way to school. She did not hear a slight rustle at the door.

"Well," she went on slowly, still looking down at the children and for the time forgetting the dolls, "I'd much prefer to be one of those little girls down there. How nice it must be to be out in all the sunshine. I wonder if they're glad 'cause they don't have to be princesses."

She tried to follow with her eyes a group of children passing briskly along, her little nose flattened against the pane in her eagerness to keep them in sight. When they had disappeared she turned her attention to the dolls again:

"It's much nicer to be anybody but a princess. I'd like to be a bird an' fly way up in the sky. But I s'pose if I went up too high I'd get all covered with blue. Every thing's blue up there. An' wouldn't I look p'culiar when I came down? All the other birds wouldn't know me. An' then if I got tired of flying round over the earth I could fly way way up in the sky until I got to heaven, just like the butterfly did in the story book."

She stopped again and looked out of the window. Then she turned to the dolls and said very earnestly: "I wonder if ev'rybody in heaven is blue."

The dolls appeared to consider the matter seriously, but neither of them gave any answer.

"Yes," the princess went on slowly, "I

think they must be. How funny they must look!"

She laughed aloud at the thought, but the dolls were too dignified even to smile.

"I s'pose when folks come down from heaven it's the sunshine that makes 'em turn white. I wonder what it was that made Aunt Wilhelmina turn so yellow. P'raps the sunshine made a mistake an' turned her yellow instead of white. Won't she look funny when she turns blue again!"

The princess broke out into a peal of laughter that rippled through the long apartment and out into the corridor, and the eyes of the man peering behind the door were lighted up as if a candle had been placed in front of his face.

"No," said the princess, after musing for a little while, "I think I'd rather be a bee than a bird; birds can't do nothing but fly round an' round an' make nests. It must be very mo't'nous. An' then when they fly way up in the air, far away where they can't see nothing, they must get very homesick an' dizzy. No, I'm glad I'm not a bird.

But I should like to be a bee. Bees have such nice times with the flowers. I've heard bees talking to the flowers in the garden lots of times, an' the flowers just seem to smile an' bow. Flowers can't talk, you know, but when they want to answer questions they just bow. An' then the flowers give nice honey to the bees; mamma says that all the honey comes from the bees an' the bees get it from the flowers. The flowers must be very gen'rous to give away so much. The bees build nice houses where they keep the honey. I've never seen their houses, but mamma says she'll take us all to see 'em some day. Oh, the bees have such lots to do! They never get tired doing nothing, like princesses."

By this time the sun had risen so high that it shone in a great blaze through the window where the princess was sitting, and enveloped her in its light. It lit up her mass of hair and changed it to the purest gold, and it made the blue lines in her pale face seem like little rivulets. She was a strange figure as she sat there talking to her dolls.

The man behind the door must have thought so, too, for he was so interested that he could not cease watching her. The princess was blinded by the light and she covered her eyes with one hand.

"The sun is very gay to-day," she said to the dolls. "But he's always gay—'cept when it rains; then he don't dare to come out, 'cause he's afraid of getting wet. I'm glad I'm not the sun. I'd much rather be a bird or a bee. It must be so tiresome to go all round the world —round an' round without stopping; but he never seems to get tired. I think he must like it; but he goes so fast that he gets very hot sometimes. I s'pose that's why we have sun-showers, 'cause they always come on very hot days, when he's in an awful persp'ration. It would be so gloomy without the sun; I'm glad he never forgets to come in here ev'ry morning. He doesn't care 'cause I'm a princess; I think he believes 'tisn't half so nice as some folks think, an' he isn't a bit afraid of me, like Amalia and the other girls was. What lots of things he must know; he must know more than anybody else,

'cause he goes to so many places an' sees ev'ry body. He must know lots of nice little girls, an' p'raps he knows lots of other little princesses that are just as lonesome as me."

By this time Margarethe had quite forgotten that she had begun to give her dolls instruction about life. She grew tired of talking and she fell into one of those dreamy states she liked so well. At first she wondered how long a sunbeam was: "It must be miles and miles," she thought. Then she wondered how long it had taken to make one; and she decided after pondering upon it a long time, that it must have taken at least a hundred years. She thought that God must have been very patient and very tired after such long work.

The sun, she knew, was made of sunbeams, and she knew, too, that it was always spinning out new sunbeams, and she could not understand how so many new ones could be made every day, if it took a hundred years to make only one. This puzzled her so much that a queer little frown appeared on her brow, and she looked distressed. The

nurse happened to come in from one of the adjoining rooms at that moment; so the princess appealed to her to solve the difficulty.

"Where does all the sunbeams come from, mamma?" she asked.

"Why, from the sun, of course," said the nurse, with a good-natured smile.

"Does the sun make 'em?"

"Yes, dear."

"But I thought God made 'em. Didn't you tell me the other day that God made ev'rything?"

Johanna looked puzzled for a moment; then she replied:

"Yes, God made the sun, and the sun made the sunbeams. That's what the sun's for."

"It's very strange," said Margarethe, slowly, "an' I don't think I like it. I thought God made ev'ry sunbeam; but I'm glad he didn't have so much work to do. He must have a great many other things besides, an' I thought the sun was alive. But if all it can do is make sunbeams it must be

only a machine. Is that all it is—only a machine?"

"Yes, dear," replied the nurse, "that's all."

"Then what makes it go?" cried Margarethe. She was greatly pained to learn that the sun she loved so much and had watched for every morning was only a machine after all. "How can it get up so regular and walk up and down in the sky?"

The nurse did not know what to say in reply to this question. While she was trying to think of a suitable answer, as she bent over the wheel where she was spinning, the princess cried triumphantly:

"I think I know how it moves. It must be God that pushes it. God wants to see all the people on the earth; so he looks out of the sun an' sees 'em. He's so far away he couldn't see ev'rything down here if he didn't have the sun to look through. I think I've seen him smiling in the light on nice mornings when it wasn't raining. But it must be so tiresome to push the sun up an' down, up an' down. I sh'd think he'd want a rest. P'r'aps he's glad when

it rains hard, 'cause he don't have to come out then."

She tried to look up into the face of the sun, but the strong light blinded her and she had to shut her eyes tight. Then she tried to catch some of the sunbeams in her hands.

"It's very strange," she said, "that I can't catch 'em. They're ever so much harder to catch than grasshoppers. I sh'd like to know where they go to. Where do the sunbeams go to, mamma?"

"I don't know, dear," replied the nurse promptly. She had never thought of the question before and she found it altogether too hard for her to consider.

"I wonder if anybody knows," the princess mused. "I s'pose my papa knows. He's a king, an' a king knows ev'rything, doesn't he?"

"No, Margarethe," said the nurse, "kings may be very wise, but they don't know everything. And I don't believe your papa knows where the sunbeams go any more than anybody else does that isn't a king."

"'Scuse me," replied the princess politely,

"but I think my papa does know where the sunbeams go, an' I think he keeps 'em, 'cause once in the procession I saw my papa with lots of 'em on his head an' on his coat, too; an' my mamma, my queen mamma, had lots on her head an' on her dress, an' they looked just beautiful, an' sparkled lovely."

The nurse bent over her loom and smiled, but she did not contradict the princess. There was a noise at the half-open door, but the whirling of the wheel prevented it from being heard distinctly.

The dolls sat very straight, seemingly drinking in the wise words of the princess. Stradella's face was almost fierce with its motionless stare, and Rose, who always looked as if she had received in extreme youth bad treatment from which she had never recovered, appeared in her beautiful dress even more pathetic than ever.

Margarethe often wished the dolls would not stare so; they made her positively nervous at times. She would have been glad if they had been born with eyes just like other

people's eyes, that would keep opening and shutting; but she supposed if they had been they wouldn't be dolls. Once she tried to keep her eyes open for a long time just as Rose did, but the attempt failed completely, and it made her eyes feel so queer she never made the experiment again.

Just now she decided that the dolls had been staring altogether too long and that their eyes must be aching very badly. She laid them on their backs so that they might take their usual morning nap. She always felt a pang of regret and pity when she put Rose to rest, for the poor rag doll never could close her eyes, and as she lay on her pillow she looked as if she were having a nightmare.

After the dolls were properly arranged for their nap, the princess allowed herself for a few moments to drift into dreamland again. Her thoughts flew very fast in this beautiful country, faster than the swiftest bird, and she used often to roam far away. But to-day she returned quickly to earth to think of some more questions.

"Has my papa been a king ever since he was a baby?" she suddenly asked the nurse. Her mind had evidently gone back to the subject of which she thought most.

"No indeed, child," replied the nurse, bending eagerly over the wheel and making it turn swiftly with her foot. "Your papa used to be a prince. But he was made king when your grandfather died. The country couldn't have two kings at once, you know."

"Why couldn't it? Are kings so dreadful?"

"Oh, dear, no, but it's against the law. The law only lets one king rule at a time. So when one king dies another king takes his place."

Margarethe pondered upon this remark for a moment. Then she said:

"I s'pose the country's afraid if they's two kings they'll both die, 'cause it's so hard to be a king. It must be very hard indeed, much harder even than to be a princess. I hope my papa won't die. Do you think he'll die?"

"Oh, I hope not, dear," replied the nurse cheerfully. "I suppose he'll have to die

sometime, like other people; but he doesn't look as if he was going to die just at present."

After a short silence the princess began again:

"Well, if my papa hasn't been a king ever since he was a baby, then my mamma hasn't been a queen ever since she was a baby, has she?"

"No, she hasn't," replied the nurse continuing her spinning as fast as she could keep her foot moving.

"Then was she a princess before she was a queen?"

"No, she wasn't ever a princess," replied the nurse.

This answer seemed to please Margarethe very much.

"Ah," she said, as if the words explained something that had puzzled her for a long time, "now I understand. If my queen mamma never's been a princess herself, then she can't know how hard it is to be one. If she did I don't believe she'd want me to keep being one."

Just then the princess thought she heard a noise in the room, and she turned around quickly from the window and saw a tall man standing in the doorway. She was so surprised that she could not speak, but gazed at him with her big eyes wide open like Stradella's, and her lips parted. The nurse, too, was so startled that her foot suddenly stopped its motion, the linen fell from her hands, and while the wheel kept turning madly round and round, she sat staring at the intruder.

It was the king.

CHAPTER XVI.

FOR a moment King Rudolph stood on the threshold; then he advanced slowly to the middle of the room, toward the place where the princess was sitting. He looked straight into her eyes with a look that was almost timid. The great king seemed embarrassed in the presence of the child. As for Margarethe and the nurse — they continued to stare at him with a fascinated gaze and with fear in their eyes, like two frightened birds under the spell of a serpent.

When the king came within a few feet of the princess, he stood still and said to her:

"You aren't afraid of me, my dear, are you?"

Her eyes were still fixed upon him and she did not move.

Then he held out his hands to her without speaking. She jumped from her seat to the floor, ran to him and threw herself on his

breast and clasped her arms tightly round his neck. He folded her in a close embrace and kept whispering to her:

"My poor little girl. My poor little Margarethe. My poor little girl."

The nurse turned away and went into one of the other rooms. The scene between the king and the princess filled her with joy and pain: with joy, because it would bring happiness to the child she loved as her own, and with pain because she knew that the affection Margarethe had for her alone would in future be shared by another.

King Rudolph went to the window-seat and sat there with the princess on his lap. Fortunately the dolls were asleep on their pillows; for if they had been awake they would have been so surprised at the sight that an expression of dismay would surely have stolen into their staring eyes. After Margarethe had recovered from the timidity she had at first felt in the presence of the king, she said:

"You're my papa an' you're such a funny papa. You're not like other little girls' papas.

My mamma—that's my nurse mamma—says that's cause you're a king an' I'm a princess. But I'd rather not be a princess, if you please, any more. I don't like it a bit. I want to be like other little girls an' have a nice papa an' mamma—I mean a nice real mamma."

"Poor child," said the king. "I've been a bad papa to you, that's true. But it isn't because I'm a king; it is because I'm a wicked, selfish man. But I'll try to be a better papa, Margarethe. You have taught me how bad I am; but I'll try, dear—I'll try to be better."

She threw her little arms round his neck.

"You're a good papa, now," she said.

They were like two people just becoming acquainted, and each was finding out how nice the other was. They talked together for a long time. The king asked the princess a great many questions about herself, and the princess told him how lonesome she was, shut up in the grim old palace, and how she often wished she didn't have to be a princess, and how she was sure if he knew how hard it was he wouldn't want her to be one any more. Every word she uttered cut

like a knife into his sensitive heart, and he wondered how his pride could have been so great as to make him cruel beyond all other fathers.

The more the princess talked, the more confidential she became. The king seemed to be quite a different person from what she had imagined him to be. She had seen him only a few times in her life. Most of these times were when in the garden she had passed him by accident. She remembered that on these occasions the nurse became very much frightened and hurried her out of his sight as fast as possible, a proceeding that appeared to her quite unaccountable.

On one occasion Margarethe had seen him in a great procession given in honor of the French king, who was visiting Schlafenland. She remembered as he passed her window, where she was looking out, the French king had waved his hand to her; but her father, dressed in his scarlet and gold uniform, his face rigid with pride, had not deigned to glance at her. She had decided that the French king was a nice king and that he

probably had little princesses at home who were just as lonesome as she was, and so he felt sorry for her. To-day her father seemed even nicer — indeed, she quickly decided that he was the nicest king in the world. She confided to him all her secrets; she told him of wonderful things she had seen on the earth and in the sky. She even described to him what she saw when she used to fall asleep and fly away high over the roofs of the houses to the place where the beautiful creatures lived, in wonderful houses of clouds and sunshine, and where people were never tired and lonesome.

As the king listened to the princess, he felt a kind of awe in her presence; he wondered what this child was that had been entrusted to his keeping, and his heart sank as he thought of the years he had neglected her. He felt, too, a strange thrill when he saw how like her face was, particularly in the expression of the eyes, to his mother's portrait. He looked at her little hand, and he shuddered when he saw how frail it was: it was the color of pearl, and little blue lines ran

through it like the rivulets in her face. Then he looked into her eyes, and he marvelled at their depth and brightness and their strange bewildered look. And when he noticed how pale and thin she was he was filled with fear, and he asked himself if the new knowledge that had come to him the night before would prove to be, as the queen had predicted, only a terrible mockery.

As he watched her, the princess kept on talking. It was as if she was trying to tell him all the things she would have said to him in her life if she had seen him as often as most little girls did their papas. To him her voice was sweeter than music and her words wiser than the words of his proudest courtiers.

For a long time she did not speak of the most wicked deed she had ever committed, which had since been to her a source both of regret and of secret joy, for she knew how it had wounded him and she was afraid to recall it. But she felt she ought to tell him how deeply she regretted causing him displeasure. So at last she found courage to say :

"I'm very sorry I ran away that day—the day the so'jers had to come after me."

She felt so ashamed of her wickedness before him that she hung down her head.

"What did you run away for?" he asked quietly, trying to suppress a smile.

Then she told him how anxious she had been to play with little girls, and how she felt she couldn't stay shut up in the palace any longer, and how beautiful the great free world seemed to her, and what a wonderful girl Amalia was, and what a fine brother she had, and how nice the other little girls and boys were.

"I wish I could have a brother just like Amalia's brother," she said. "Why can't I?"

He stroked her hair slowly with his right hand, but did not answer.

"It would be so nice," she went on. "Amalia's very proud of her brother."

Then the king asked her some more questions about Amalia and the little girls, and when she found he was not displeased at hearing her talk about them, she gave him

a long and vivid description of the events of the memorable afternoon. When she had told the whole story, with many repetitions and many returns to parts she had omitted, in order to make it all perfectly clear, she showed him the doll that Amalia had left behind. He took Rose up in his left hand and held her up at arm's length. And when he examined the strange rag doll with her poor, plaintive, battered face and her marvellous dress of pink silk with long pink ribbons floating all around her, his face flushed and his eyes twinkled. After looking at Rose very thoughtfully, he put her back on her pillow and said gravely:

"Rose is a very nice doll. Amalia must have been sorry to lose her. Do you think Amalia would know her if she were to see her now in her new dress?"

"Oh, I'm sure she would," replied the princess, briskly. "She hasn't changed a bit since I've had her. Only she always does seem so tired."

"Do you think that Amalia misses her?"

"Yes, indeed. She must miss her awfully,

'cause she's such a nice doll. She never gives any trouble an' she never falls asleep like Stradella when I'm giving her a lesson. If I only knew where Amalia was I'd give her back Rose, but I should hate to have her go way now 'cause I'm very fond of her."

In the mind of the king a fresh struggle began between the prejudices of his pride and his new-born affection for the princess. He understood at once the natural instinct for companionship that Margarethe's story of the little girls had displayed, and he realized the necessity of gratifying it. But his pride was so strong that even now her fondness for the children of the common people shocked and dismayed him. But when he looked into her pale face, he blamed himself for his past folly, and determined to do all he could to atone for it. So he said:

"Don't you think if we tried very hard we could find Amalia? Then you could give her doll back to her and she could come sometimes to play with you."

The eyes of the princess opened wide. To see Amalia again, to have the big girl come

to play with her — this was too much happiness. At first, the mere thought was so thrilling she could scarcely speak. But after a moment she cried breathlessly:

"Oh, that would be lovely!" Then she uttered a long sigh, as she always did when anything gratified her very much. The king was delighted to see how much pleasure his words had given her.

"I think I can find Amalia," he said, as if he were quite sure of it. "Did she tell you what her other name was?"

"No," replied the princess. "Her name's just Amalia, an' it's a very nice name too."

At that moment the door of the apartment opened and the princess was surprised to see the queen standing on the threshold. Queen Louisa was dressed all in white. Her face was pale, and dark lines were under her eyes, and she appeared almost ghost-like as she glided slowly toward the king, who still held the princess in his arms. Margarethe looked at her wonderingly, as if she was afraid of her, as she had been of the king.

"We have become great friends, Mar-

garethe and I," said the king when she came near.

The queen sat beside him on the window-seat and said to the princess:

"Won't you come to me, Margarethe?"

But the princess clung close to the king and whispered:

"I'm afraid of you."

"Afraid of me?" said the queen. "You are not afraid of your mother, are you?"

"I'm not afraid of my nurse mamma," replied Margarethe, "'cause she's very nice. But you're not a nice mamma. Queens never is."

The eyes of the unhappy queen filled with tears.

"I deserve this, Rudolph," she said. "How could I have been so blind?"

When the princess saw the tears in the eyes of the queen she softened, though she did not understand what had caused them.

"I am very sorry for you," she whispered.

Then the queen took her in her arms and clasped her to her breast just as the king had done. She kissed the little princess again

and again. Then, while she still held the child, she said to the king:

"See how pale she is! Just when we have learned to appreciate her she will be taken from us."

"It may not be too late," said the king. "Perhaps we can save her yet."

Then the king and queen said a great many things about the princess, which the princess herself could not understand. And the queen asked her a great many questions, and the princess repeated many of the things she had told the king, about her loneliness and about Amalia and the little girls and boys, and she showed her the two dolls. The queen was very nice to her, almost as nice as the king, though she seemed so grand the princess could not help being still a little afraid of her.

When, after a long time, they went away they promised the princess they would try to find Amalia; that in future she would be permitted to go out of the palace as often as the weather was good, and that they would come to see her every day.

The princess was very happy — almost as happy as she had been on the afternoon of her flight; and when the nurse, after talking for a little while with the king and queen in one of the adjoining apartments, entered the room, she heard Margarethe say to the dolls:

"Kings and queens isn't so bad as some folks thinks they is, after all."

"GOOD AFTERNOON, GEN'RAL."

CHAPTER XVII.

NEXT morning the king and queen came to see the princess, and they brought with them a queer little old man with bits of twinkling eyes and a long nose that had a red spot on the end of it, and with a funny little wig that was twisted just like Amalia's hair. Margarethe knew that he was the celebrated Doctor Peltzer, for she had often seen him from her window. Life for her was a panorama viewed from a window-seat. She knew most of the people of the great kingdom by sight, and she often speculated and weaved wonderful romances about them.

Doctor Peltzer smiled upon her a long, thin smile, and showed two rows of little black teeth. He shook her by the hand and told her that he knew all about her, and said she was a quaint little primrose; and he pinched her cheek and felt her arms and tapped her gently on the breast, and all the while made

jokes that caused the princess great merriment. She thought he was the funniest little man she had ever seen. While he was doing this the king and queen watched him anxiously.

When he had finished his tapping and his joking, he stood in front of Margarethe and studied her as if she were one of the pictures in the Schlafenburg gallery. Then he took a big pinch of snuff and said, in a voice that rang through the room, "Ahem!" The princess wondered how such a little man could make such a loud noise. Then he cried in a high, shrill tone, very different from the one he had just used:

"I don't like to see little birds shut up in cages. It never does 'em any good."

The king and queen said nothing. After taking another pinch of snuff, the doctor piped again:

"We'll have to open the cage and let the bird fly out, or something will happen to the bird very soon."

Still the king and queen were silent. They showed great respect for the little

man and seemed anxious to hear what he had to say. But the doctor was in no hurry. He took another pinch of snuff and after a little while piped once more:

"Little birds should have other little birds for playmates. If they don't they never learn to fly."

Then the king showed a little impatience.

"Do you think it's too late?" he asked.

Margarethe sat looking at the anxious faces of the king and queen and the little twinkling eyes of the doctor.

"There are some people," replied the little man slowly, "that are born angels. How they ever happen to stray into this sphere is a mystery. And it's as much a mystery to themselves as any one else. They don't feel comfortable here and they're always trying to go back where they belong. It's pretty hard to keep an angel in this rough world."

"But what shall we do?" cried the king.

"Free the prisoner, that's all," said the doctor, promptly. "Let the bird fly out of the cage."

Margarethe, who stood, with Stradella in her arms, watching them with her wistful eyes, wondered what bird it was they were talking about. It surely couldn't be her canary, for her canary seemed always happy, hopping from one side of the cage to the other and nibbling at the seed and at the bits of bread she used to hold up to the bird-cage in her hand.

Then the king and queen and the little man whispered together in one corner of the apartment, and the princess deftly arranged the dresses of the dolls, which looked a little rumpled, so that they might appear at their best. She wondered if Doctor Peltzer could tell her how to remove the tired look from Rose's face; but she did not quite dare to ask him, for she feared he might think it undignified to prescribe for a doll.

In a few moments the doctor approached Margarethe again and pinched her cheek, and told her she was the queerest little girl

in the world, and that he intended to come to see her very often and have some more fun with her. Then he ambled out of the apartment, his legs wriggling as if they wanted to get away from each other. The king and queen seemed very unhappy after he left. Margarethe wondered if they disliked the little man; she couldn't understand why they should, for she thought he was very nice and amusing.

"Do you think you could find Amalia if you should look for her?" asked the king, who seemed to have been very much impressed by the description of the big girl Margarethe had given him.

"I 'spose she's down by the river," replied the princess. "She told me she played there ev'ry day."

"Then we'll drive down there and see if we can't find her."

"Now?" asked the princess, with a kind of awe, as if such happiness could not be for her so soon.

"Yes, why not?" replied the king. "If you'll get ready, we'll start at once."

"An' will the pretty lady go too?" the princess asked, timidly. She had adopted this title for the queen and clung to it.

"Yes, dear," Queen Louisa replied, "if you would like to have me come." It had taken the queen a long time to conquer the objections to the king's plan of seeking out Amalia, but she had consented at last.

In half an hour the queen and the princess were ready. They drove, not in the royal coach in which the king and the queen usually appeared in public, but in the plain open carriage, which differed in no way from the carriages of many of their subjects. The king did not wear his uniform, and the queen was simply dressed; so only a few people noticed them.

They drove up the steep hill that Margarethe had climbed on the day of her flight. Every tree, every rock was stamped upon her memory, and she beheld them all again with a thrill of happiness. The air was balmy and rich with the perfume of the wild spring flowers that lined the roadway. Margarethe felt like the little girl that fell

asleep one night and woke up in heaven. She had not realized that such happiness was possible. She wondered if it could be true, if it were not one of the wonderful dreams she used to have in the window-seat.

As the carriage dashed along she pointed out to the king and queen the place where she had stopped to rest under the tree near the statue of King Wilhelm, and told of her narrow escape from Prince Fritz, which made the queen turn pale.

When they reached the point at the top of the hill where General von Blomberg had discovered her, she almost jumped out of the carriage for joy, for there, down by the river-bank, she could see a group of children playing! She wanted to get out of the carriage at once and run down to them, but the king detained her.

"We will drive down there, Margarethe," he said, holding her firmly by the arm, "and then you can speak with your little friends, if those children are your friends."

The only driveway to the river was so narrow that few carriages went down there,

and the coachman was obliged to pick his way very carefully. The princess had to restrain her impatience by a great effort. As they approached the river they saw that the children were divided into two groups. When they arrived near the first group, Margarethe scanned their faces eagerly. To her bitter disappointment Amalia was not among them.

Then the carriage proceeded toward the second group. It consisted of several girls and boys; they were in a circle and seemed to be watching something or someone in the centre. Margarethe could see only a few of their faces, and the face of Amalia was not one of these. Her heart sank.

Could it be that she was to be disappointed after all?

When the carriage approached the children the circle was broken and a little puny boy with watery blue eyes and yellow hair limped out of it. One of his bare feet was bound with a piece of white linen. He had evidently hurt his foot and some one had bound the wound for him. When Margarethe beheld him she uttered a cry of delight.

"It's Hermann!" she exclaimed.

Just then was revealed the tall strapping figure of a girl with her hair braided behind her head in a stiff pig-tail. She had been bending over the puny boy's foot and had therefore been concealed by those who were watching her. Margarethe uttered another cry.

"There she is! There she is! Oh, Amalia, Amalia!"

The big girl turned quickly around, saw the carriage and the princess standing in it, and was stupefied with astonishment. Then her face grew pale and she appeared to be greatly frightened. She stared at the princess, then at the queen, then at the king and then at the carriage. She was trying to make up her mind whether to run away or not. Then she decided that she could not run faster than the horses and she stood trembling with fear.

The king leaned over toward her on his seat and said:

"Come here, my child."

She did not move. Terror seemed to have deprived her of the use of her limbs.

The princess jumped up from her seat.

"Don't be afraid, Amalia," she said, reassuringly. "My papa won't hurt you."

At this Amalia burst into a flood of tears.

"'Twasn't my fault," she sobbed. "I didn't ask her to come and play with us; she came all by herself. I didn't want her to run away."

She had not recovered from the fear she felt the day of the princess's flight and capture by the general. For weeks after, she had not ventured near the river. Just now the thought came to her that the king, whom she had often seen before and recognized at once, had been seeking for her ever since that day, in order to punish her for her crime of playing with a princess. He had found her at last!

The king understood the situation in an instant. He quickly opened the carriage door and said to Margarethe:

"Come down and explain to Amalia why you have come to see her."

Then he got out himself and lifted her down to the ground. The princess ran to

Amalia and threw her arms around the big girl and kissed her on the cheek.

"You musn't cry, Amalia," she said, "'cause they isn't anything to cry about. My papa—he's an awful good papa now an' isn't a bit like he used to be—well he said I might come an' find you an' give you back Rose an' ask you to come an' play with me, 'cause I'm so lonesome without nobody to play with 'cept the dolls. The dolls is real nice, but not so nice as girls. An' Rose is real well, an' you can have her back again, but I'll be awful sorry to have her go 'way, 'cause I like her very much."

By the time this speech was over Amalia had recovered from her fright, but not from her astonishment. She began to dry her eyes and listened without realizing what the princess was saying, except that she herself was not going to be put in prison or be punished by the king.

When Amalia's grief was over, Margarethe told her a great deal that had happened since the adventure by the river, and urged her to come back to the palace. But Amalia would

not consider this for an instant. The mere thought of entering the palace alarmed her.

"I can't go without asking my mother," she said. "And if my mother says I can go, I'll come to-morrow."

She felt so sure her mother would not let her go that she had no hesitation in giving this promise.

Margarethe was delighted at the prospect, and she at once ran to tell the king about it.

King Rudolph approached Amalia and took her by the hand.

"You must not be afraid of me," he said, gently. "I would not hurt anyone that had been kind to my little girl, and I want you to come to the palace and be her companion. She has never had any little girls to play with and she's very fond of you."

Amalia was too overawed to make any reply. Then the king asked her to tell him her father's name and where he lived.

"I will send some one to see your parents about you," he said, "and ask them if they are willing that you should live in the palace with the princess."

Then he took her by the hand and led her to the queen, and the queen spoke kindly to her and thanked her for being good to Margarethe. The princess kissed her good-bye and after saying she should watch for her the next day, she entered the carriage again with the king and was driven away, leaving Amalia, who followed her until she was out of sight with a stupefied stare.

While this scene was being enacted most of the children were scampering away to their homes. Hermann had recognized the princess and had warned the other children, who had promptly taken to their heels. He had had no time to warn Amalia before she was discovered. So he hurried home as fast as he could limp, and told his mother that the king had found Amalia and was going to carry her off to the great dungeon where all were kept who had committed crimes against the state.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A FEW hours after Amalia's discovery the king sent one of his courtiers to the parents of the big girl to obtain their consent to his plan for making her companion to the princess. At first they were as frightened as the child herself had been at the thought of sending her to the great palace which they regarded with veneration. But when they heard of the solitude of the princess, and of the affection she had for Amalia, they expressed willingness that their child should go.

Then they rejoiced in the good fortune that had come to them, for King Rudolph had offered to pay a generous sum for the loss of Amalia, who was next to the oldest of a large family and could easily be spared.

When she herself realized that he did not wish to punish her and that Margarethe really cared for her, she soon lost the fear she had

felt of the king. So she was quite eager to assume the next day her new duties in spite of her dislike of leaving home.

When she arrived at the palace she found Margarethe eagerly watching for her at the window. She was at once taken to the apartments of the princess, who received her so affectionately that her heart was won at once, though she secretly disapproved of a princess as a playmate.

"You must come an' see Rose," said the princess, clasping her by the hand and leading her to the window-seat, where Rose, as usual, was taking her sleepless rest.

Margarethe, who had dressed the doll in the pink dress, which she considered most becoming to Rose's style of beauty, took her up in her arms and presented her to Amalia, expecting that the big girl would snatch her rapturously to her breast.

But Amalia, to her astonishment, did no such thing. She looked at the doll incredulously, as if she did not know who she was; then her face lighted up with recognition and she burst into a loud laugh that echoed

through the rooms. She laughed and laughed for a long time without being able to stop; every time she glanced at the doll she burst into a fresh fit of laughter. Her cheeks were puffed out and she looked fatter and redder than ever.

Margarethe became alarmed. She never had seen anyone laugh like that before. The nurse, who had thought best to leave the children alone for a time so that they might become better acquainted, hurried into the room to see what the matter was.

"What are you laughing at?" she asked, looking at Amalia with amazement.

But Amalia could not reply. She merely glanced at the doll again and burst into fresh laughter. But after a little while she managed to gasp:

"Oh, it's so funny."

"What is so funny, Amalia?" asked the princess.

"Why the doll—Rose," cried Amalia, laughing again. "Who ever saw a rag doll with a pink silk dress an' pink silk ribbons on before?"

The nurse turned away to hide her smiles.

"I'm sure I think she's very nice," said Margarethe, gazing helplessly at Rose's battered face. She felt very much hurt by Amalia's merriment, and was pained to observe how little the big girl seemed to care for the doll.

When Amalia, after a long time, recovered from her laughter, the princess said to her:

"I'm very fond of Rose. But I think I ought to give her back to you 'cause she's yours, you know, an' you ought to have her."

"Oh, I don't want her," said Amalia, carelessly. "I've got lot's more nicer dolls than Rose. Why, I made her myself."

"I should think you'd like her all the better if you made her yourself," said Margarethe. She wondered if the big girl could be hard-hearted. But when Amalia embraced Stradella and said endearing things to the wax doll she decided that she was not.

Amalia's enthusiasm for Stradella was unbounded. She thought she was the most beautiful doll in the world and felt a kind of awe in her presence, though every now and

then she could not resist the temptation to embrace her ferociously.

Amalia was so good-natured and such a delightful companion that the princess very quickly forgave her for her ridicule of Rose. But she could not understand why Amalia had such a fondness for abusing the rag doll, for tossing it up in the air, throwing it on the floor and pulling its poor, distorted arms.

The two children soon became deeply attached to each other. By the king's order they were permitted to roam about the palace gardens at will and, accompanied by the nurse, even to go out into the park in front of the palace, and play on the grass under the trees with the other children.

Amalia's four little sisters and her brother Hermann, of whom she never ceased to be proud, came to the palace nearly every day to see her, and they used to have merry games with her and the princess. They became so fond of Margarethe that they used to assure her they didn't at all mind her being a princess, and that they should not like her any more even if she were not one.

Stories of the fondness of the princess for all children, whether rich or poor, great or humble, soon spread over the kingdom, and her name was loved and honored in every home. And in the morning, when she used to play in the park, crowds of children would come to see and to speak with her and join in her games. She thought they were all nice boys and girls and never suspected that they cared to play with her because she was a princess.

Every afternoon she would go for a drive with the king and queen, and the people used to watch for her, especially the mothers, who would hold up their little ones to the windows to see her pass. Everyone said she was the most popular person in the kingdom, the king and queen not excepted, though the popularity of both rulers had greatly increased during the past few months.

The people of Schlafenland began to notice a great change in the king and queen, The haughty look that the king's face had once worn had given place to a milder expression; and even the queen's pride seemed to

have softened. Many of the harsher laws of the country had, by the king's command, been relaxed, and King Rudolph had of late shown more mercy to those who had committed offences than ever before.

Greater peace and prosperity settled on the kingdom. Even the raids of Prince Fritz and his men were growing less destructive and more rare; and it was generally felt that the country's new fortune was in some mysterious way connected with the Princess Margarethe.

As for the princess herself, a great change had come over her too. A flush of delicate pink had appeared in her face, the blue veins had disappeared and her eyes had lost their look of supernatural brightness. At times she seemed a vision of health as well as of beauty.

As the princess grew stronger it began to be reported again that the law which kept her from succeeding to the throne was to be repealed. Indeed, the king and the Duke of Babrantino thought seriously of having it changed and they held many conferences

together on the subject. But when it was mentioned to little Doctor Peltzer he opposed it violently. He used to call on the princess every day and he had become one of her dearest friends.

"Bah," he said, "what nonsense! The child finds it hard enough to be a princess as it is, and if she hears you're going to make a queen of her she'll fret herself sick and you'll spoil all the good that's been done. Besides, queens aren't made out of angels."

No one knew just what he meant by this remark, but a few suspected that he meant a great deal more than he said.

CHAPTER XIX.

T was so cold when the winter came that the princess was obliged to be shut up again in the palace, but as she had Amalia, and as a great many children used to come and play with her, and as the king and queen and the merry doctor visited her every day, she didn't mind.

But after a few weeks the confinement robbed her of the roses the sun and air had given her, and she grew almost as thin as she had been before. Then Doctor Peltzer became funnier and took larger pinches of snuff, and stood looking at her longer than ever out of his bits of eyes. And the expression on the faces of the king and queen, when she talked to them in her tired voice, was very sad.

She began to have her wonderful dreams again, and she used to frighten Amalia by telling her of them. When the tempest roared and shook the windows of the palace she

would shut her eyes and imagine that the spirit of the wind — an old, old man with a long white beard and dressed in a flowing white robe — used to come into the room. He would take her gently in his arms and carry her with him all over the world, and then high up into the air to the place where she had gone so often in her vision, filled with the beautiful cloud-spirits, many of them children. These spirits would sing for joy when she came among them and would gather round her and play to her the loveliest music from the pipes they carried in their hands.

But how could she describe what she had seen? Those that never had seen it could not understand it, Amalia least of all. The princess did not like to speak of cloud-land to the king and queen or the nurse, for it seemed to make them unhappy. So, after a time, she described it to no one except the doctor, who was eager to hear about it, though he said old men like himself were never carried off on such fine journeys.

After a time she found herself too weak

to play those games with Amalia that she loved; she could only sit at her window with the big girl and the two dolls. Amalia was always full of interesting conversation that never tired the princess, and she would talk nearly all day, even when the princess wasn't listening. Her admiration for Stradella was so great that she used to spend most of her time in gazing at her and in changing the wonderful gowns she wore. Amalia used to wonder if the dolls of all princesses had such a bewildering wardrobe as Stradella's.

Reports of the weakness of the princess were quickly spread among the people, and many of them, especially among the children, used to come to the palace every day to greet her at the window. These visits of her friends, as she called them, gave her great pleasure. The king, at first, feared they might excite and tire her, and wished to have them stopped; but Doctor Peltzer, who was a great tyrant in his way, though he never was harsh to the princess, declared they should not be stopped. So every day the princess held court, and hundreds of her subjects came

to pay her the sincerest homage ever paid to mortal.

But the love of the people could not make her strong again. Every day she grew weaker, and at last she could scarcely walk about. The nurse made a bed for her in her window-seat where she would lie contentedly in the sunshine with her two dolls in her arms.

Her visions became more frequent and more wonderful. At last they became so frequent she dwelt in dreamland far oftener than on earth. Amalia had been sent away, much to her grief, but she used to come, with her brother and the other friends of the princess, to see Margarethe nearly every morning, when she was most likely not to be in the country of the cloud-spirits.

One night, when she was floating on the borderland of dreams, between sleeping and waking, she thought she heard a wild ringing of bells and the noise of voices outside the palace.

In the morning she was not sure whether she had really heard these noises or only

dreamt them; so she asked the nurse about them.

Johanna seemed very happy and told her that she really had heard the noises and that a wonderful thing had happened in the night. Then the nurse went into one of the adjoining rooms and came back with the king. And the king had in his arms a curious bundle of red silk with a long dress of fine lace hanging from it almost to the ground. He sat beside the princess and kissed her. Then he opened the bundle and showed her a strange little being with a very red face and little fingers like claws; and he told the princess that this was her new brother, the great king that was to be, who had come during the night, when she had heard the ringing of the bells and the shouting.

The princess almost cried for joy. She lifted herself up in bed and gazed with delight at the red face and blinking eyes of the infant. How proud she should be of him! After a moment of silence, she said:

"Amalia will be so glad when she knows that I've got a brother, too."

That very morning, she heard a clattering of horses' hoofs on the high road. She looked out and saw a troop of horsemen tearing past the palace. She recognized them at once. In the centre rode the terrible figure that had given her such alarm on the day of her flight. Prince Fritz looked fiercer than ever; his face was pale, and his eyes blazed as if he was struggling with suppressed rage. His fine black horse was covered with foam. Margarethe noticed that all the other horses were also foam-covered, and the riders seemed to be as angry as their leader.

When they had flashed out of sight the princess told the nurse about them, and Johanna hurried to the window to try to catch a glimpse of the prince, for she had never seen him. But Fritz was already some distance away. Then Johanna explained to Margarethe that the prince and his men had probably heard of the coming of her brother and had ridden to the city to learn if the news were true.

After that day, Prince Fritz and his band

disappeared mysteriously. Some said that he had gone to the East to fight in the army of the Sultan; others that he had taken to the mountains and had become a robber-chief, and others still declared that a quarrel had sprung up among the members of his band soon after they heard of the birth of the young prince, and that Prince Fritz had been killed. But no one knew which of these stories to believe.

Every day the prince was brought to Margarethe's bedside. She never tired of holding him in her lap, of examining his queer little hands, his fine eyebrows, his spears of thin white hair and of peering into his little eyes. She could hardly realize that such a small being was a great prince. Sometimes, she became quite worried over the thought of this wonderful fact.

"Poor little thing," she used to whisper, "I'm so sorry you've got to be a prince; but I hope you won't mind. P'raps boys don't mind being princes so much as girls mind being princesses."

She confided her worries to Dr. Peltzer

and he relieved her greatly by telling her that boys didn't at all mind being princes; in fact they rather liked it.

In the morning, as she lay in her bed near the window-seat, the sun would come and kiss her eyes and she would gaze rapturously at the great red flame in the east. She always saw wonderful figures in the sun. Some of these were like the cloud spirits, but very much larger and more majestic; and, as the sun rose, she thought it gradually shaped itself into a great eye that looked out upon the whole world.

But it was at the close of day that the most wonderful figures appeared. Then the whole sky would become flushed with red, and she could see beautiful ethereal creatures in garments woven with sunbeams floating in the air. When Amalia first came, the princess used to point out these figures to her; but the big girl never could find them.

"I can't see nothing but red in the sky," she would say. "That's a sign it's going to be a hot day to-morrow."

It always seemed a pity to Margarethe

that Amalia could not see these spirits, but she decided it must be because she was near-sighted.

Sometimes at night the princess would lie awake watching the stars. She believed that every star was an eye and that God had to have so many eyes at night because it was so dark. The long lines of light that streamed from the stars seemed very wonderful to her; the little eyes in the sky were always looking into her eyes. She couldn't understand why that was, because they surely must look at other people now and then. Once she dreamed that she was walking up to the sky on one of these paths of light. But when she had passed high above the tops of the houses, she lost her way. She couldn't remember what happened after that; she only knew that when she woke up in the morning the sun was laughing aloud in her face at the trick played upon her.

One morning, when the prince came with the king, she was sitting up and looking out of the window at Amalia, who was standing with her brother and some girls in the park.

She asked the king to hold the prince up to the window so that both Amalia and Hermann could see him, and she looked at the infant and then smiled down at them proudly. And Amalia understood what she meant and smiled back and kissed her hand to the future king.

That was the last time the princess ever sat up. For days she lay smiling peacefully, and they knew she was in the land of her beautiful dreams. She never complained; she seemed always happy. She was merely fading away, the doctor said, going where she belonged. The king and queen came every day to her bed-side and sometimes she knew them, but not always.

One morning she seemed a little brighter than usual. Her eyes shone. She whispered to the nurse and asked where her papa and the pretty lady were. There was something so peculiar in her manner that the nurse summoned the king and queen.

In a few moments they came and all three stood by the bed-side. The little princess was lying with her eyes wide open. The look of

wonder in them had changed to one of surprise and then to a look of relief and satisfaction, as if she had learned something she had long wanted to know. A happy smile overspread her face and the little eyes closed. Then they saw that the Princess Margarethe had gone to the land where there are no princesses.